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PROLOGUES
AND
EPILOGUES,
CELEBRATED FOR THEIR
POETICAL MERIT.

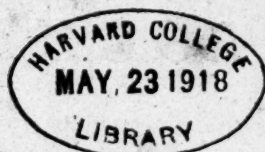
SPEAK THE SPEECH, I PR'YTHEE, AS, I PRO-
NOUNCE IT.—

SHAKSPEARE.

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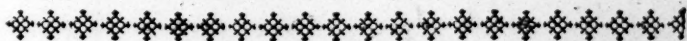
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PROLOGUES
AND
EPILOGUES.



PROLOGUE

To *Dryden's WILD GALLANT*, when first acted.

IS it not strange, to hear a poet say,
He comes to ask you, how you like the play?
You have not seen it yet! alas 'tis true,
But now your love and hatred judge, not you.
And cruel factions (brib'd by interest) come
Not to weigh merit, but to give their doom:
Our poet, therefore, jealous of th' event,
And (though much boldness takes) not confident,
Has sent me, whether you, fair ladies, too
Sometimes upon small occasions go,

2 P R O L O G U E S, and
And from this scheme, drawn for the hour and day,
Bid me enquire the fortune of his play.

[*The curtain drawn discovers two Astrologers;
the prologue is presented to them.*

First Astrol. reads. A Figure of the heavenly bodies
in their several apartments, Feb. the 5th, half an hour
after three, afternoon, from whence you are to judge the
success of a new Play called the *Wild Gallant*.

Second Astrol. Who must judge of it, we or these gentlemen? We'll not meddle with it, so tell your poet.
Here are in this house the ablest mathematicians in *Europe* for his purpose.

'They will resolve the question e'er they part.

First ASTROLOGER.

Yet let us judge it by the rules of art.

First *Jupiter*, the ascendant's lord disgrac'd,
In the twelfth house, and near grim *Saturn* plac'd,
Denote short life unto the play:—

Second ASTROLOGER.

Jove yet,

In his apartments *Sagitary*, set
Under his own roof, cannot take much wrong;

First ASTROLOGER.

Why then the life's not very short nor long;

Second ASTROLOGER.

The luck not very good, nor very ill.

P R O L O G U E.

That is to say, 'tis as 'tis taken still.

First ASTROLOGER.

But, brother, *Ptolemy* the learned says,
'Tis the fifth house from whence we judge of plays.

Venus the lady of that house I find
Is *Peregrine*, your play is ill design'd,
It should have been but one continued song,
Or at the least a dance of three hours long.

EPILOGUES.

3

Second ASTROLOGER.

But yet the greatest mischief does remain,
The twelfth apartment bears the lord of *Spain*;
Whence I conclude it is your author's lot,
To be endanger'd by a *Spanish* plot.

PROLOGUE.

Our poet yet protection hopes from you,
But bribes you not with any thing that's new.
Nature is old, which poets imitate,
And for wit, those that boast their own estate,
Forget *Fletcher* and *Ben* before them went,
Their elder brothers, and that vastly spent:
So much 'twill hardly be repair'd again,
Not, though supply'd with all the wealth of *Spain*.
This play is *English*, and the growth your own;
As such it yields to *English* plays alone.
He could have wish'd it better for your sakes;
But that in plays he finds you love mistakes:
Besides he thought it was in vain to mend
What you are bound in honour to defend,
That *English* Wit (howe'er despis'd by some)
Like *English* Valour still may overcome.

EPILOGUE

When the *WILD GALLANT* was first acted.

THE *Wild Gallant* has quite play'd out his game;
He's marry'd now, and that will make him tame;
Or if you think marriage will not reclaim him,
The criticks swear they'll damn him, but they'll tame him.
Yet though our poet's threatned most by these,
They are the only people he can please;
For he to humour them, has shewn to-day,
That which they only like, a wretched play.

But though his play be ill, here have been shown
 The greatest wits and beauties of the town,
 And his occasion having brought you here,
 You are too grateful to become severe.
 There is not any person here so mean,
 But he may freely judge each act and scene:
 But if you bid him chuse his judges then,
 He boldly names true English Gentlemen:
 For he ne'er thought a handsome garb or dress,
 So great a crime to make their judgment less:
 And with these gallants he these ladies joins,
 To judge that language their converse refines.
 But if their censures should condemn his play,
 Far from disputing, he does only pray,
 He may *Leander's* destiny obtain:
 Now spare him, drown him when he comes again.

P R O L O G U E

At the Revival of the WILD GALLANT.

AS some raw 'squire, by tender mother bred,
 Till one and twenty keeps his maidenhead,
 (Pleas'd with some sport which he alone does find,
 And thinks a secret to all human kind;)
 Till mightily in love, yet half afraid,
 He first attempts the gentle dairy maid:
 Succeeding there, and led by the renown
 Of *Whetstone's-Park*, he comes at length to town,
 Where enter'd by some school-fellow, or friend,
 He grows to break glass-windows in the end:
 His valour too, which with the Watch began,
 Proceeds to duel, and he kills his man.

By such degrees, while knowledge he did want,
 Our unfledg'd author writ a *Wild Gallant*.
 He thought him monstrous lewd (I'll lay my life)
 Because suspected with his landlord's wife:
 But since his knowledge of the town began,
 He thinks him now a very civil man:
 And, much ashamed of what he was before,
 Has fairly play'd him at three wenches more.
 'Tis some amends his frailties to confess;
 Pray pardon him his want of wickedness:
 He's towardsly, and will come on apace;
 His frank confession shews he has some grace.
 You balk'd him when he was a young beginner,
 And almost spoil'd a very hopeful sinner:
 But, if once more you slight his weak endeavour.
 For ought I know, he may turn tail for ever.

EPILOGUE

On the same occasion.

OF all dramattick writing, Comick Wit,
 As 'tis the best, so 'tis most hard to hit.
 For it lies all in level to the eye,
 Where all may judge, and each defect may spy.
 Humour is that which every day we meet,
 And therefore known as every publick street;
 In which, if e'er the poet go astray,
 You all can point, 'twas there he lost his way.
 But, what's so common, to make pleasant too,
 Is more than any wit can always do.
 For 'tis, like *Turks*, with Hen and Rice to treat;
 To make regalio's out of common meat.
 But, in your diet you grow savages:
 Nothing but human flesh your taste can please:

And, as their feasts with slaughter'd slaves began,
So you, at each new play, must have a Man.
Hither you come, as to see prizes fought;
If no blood's drawn, you cry the prize is naught.
But fools grow wary now; and when they see
A poet eying round the company,
Straight each man for himself begins to doubt;
They shrink like seamen when a press comes out.
Few of them will be found for publick use,
Except you charge an oaf upon each house,
Like the train'd-bands, and every man engage
For a sufficient fool to serve the stage.
And, when with much ado you get him there,
Where he in all his glory should appear,
Your poets make him such rare things to say,
That he's more wit than any man i' th' play.
But of so ill a mingle with the rest,
As when a parrot's taught to break a jest.
Thus aiming to be fine, they make a show
As tawdry squires in country churches do.
Things well consider'd, 'tis so hard to make
A Comedy, which should the knowing take:
That our dull poet in despair to please,
Does humbly beg by me his writ of ease.
'Tis a land-tax which he's too poor to pay;
You, therefore must some other impost lay.
Would you but change for serious plot and verse,
This motley garniture of fool and farce,
Nor scorn a mode, because 'tis taught at home,
Which does, like vests, our gravity become;
Our poet yields you should this play refuse,
As tradesmen, by the change of fashions, lose
With some content their fripperies of *France*,
In hope it may their staple trade advance.

PROLOGUE.

To *Dryden's* RIVAL LADIES.

'TIS much desir'd, you judges of the town
 Would pass a vote to put all Prologues down;
 For who can shew me, since they first were writ,
 They e'er converted one hard-hearted wit?
 Yet the world's mended well; in former days
 Good *Prologues* were as scarce, as now good *Plays*.
 For the reforming poets of our age,
 In this first charge, spend their poetic rage:
 Expect no more when once the *Prologue's* done;
 The wit is ended e'er the *Play's* begun.
 You now have habits, dances, scenes, and rhymes;
 High language often; aye, and sense, sometimes:
 As for a clear contrivance doubt it not;
 They blow out candles to give light to th' plot.
 And for surprize, two bloody-minded men
 Fight 'till they die, then rise and dance agen:
 Such deep intrigues you're welcome to this day;
 But blame yourselves, not him who writ the play:
 Though his plot's dull, as can be well desir'd,
 Wit stiff as any you have e'er admir'd:
 He's bound to please, not to write well; and knows
 There is a mode in plays as well as cloaths:
 Therefore kind judges — — —

A SECOND PROLOGUE *enters.*

2d. — HOLD! would you admit
 For judges all you see within the pit?
 1st. Whom would he then except, or on what score?
 2d. All, who (like him) have writ ill plays before;
 For they, like thieves condemn'd, are hangmen made,
 To execute the members of their trade.

All that are writing now he would disown :
 But then he must except, e'en half the town.
 All chol'rick, losing gamesters, who in spite
 Will damn to-day, because they lost last night :
 All servants whom their mistrefs' scorn upbraids ;
 All maudlin lovers, and all slighted maids :
 All who are out of humour, or severe ;
 All, that want wit, or hope to find it here.

P R O L O G U E.

To the INDIAN QUEEN †.

As the musick plays a soft air, the curtain rises slowly, and discovers an *Indian Boy and Girl* sleeping under two Plantain-Trees ; and when the curtain is almost up, the musick turns into a tune expressing an alarm, at which the Boy wakes and speaks.

BOY.

WAKE, wake *Quevira* : our soft rest must cease,
 And fly together with our country's peace ;
 No more must we sleep under Plantain shade,
 Which neither heat could pierce, nor cold invade ;
 Where bounteous nature never feels decay,
 And opening buds drive falling fruits away.

QUEVIRA.

Why should men quarrel here, where all possess
 As much as they can hope for by success ?
 None can have most, where nature is so kind
 As to exceed man's use, though not his mind.

BOY.

By antient prophecies we have been told
 Our world should be subdu'd by one more old ;

† A Tragedy written by Sir Robert Howard and Dryden.

EPILOGUES.

9

And see that world already's hither come.

QUEVIRA.

If these be they, we welcome then our doom.
Their looks are such, that mercy flows from thence,
More gentle than our native innocence.

BOY.

Why should we then fear these are enemies,
That rather seem to us like Deities?

QUEVIRA.

By their protection let us beg to live;
They came not here to conquer, but forgive.
If so, your goodness may your power express,
And we shall judge both best by our success.

EPILOGUE.

To the INDIAN QUEEN. Spoken by *Montezuma*.

YOU see what shifts we are inforc'd to try.
To help out wit with some variety;
Shews may be found that never yet were seen,
'Tis hard to find such wit as ne'er has been:
You have seen all that this old world could do,
We therefore try the fortune of the new,
And hope it is below your aim to hit
At untaught nature with your practis'd wit:
Our naked *Indians* then, when wits appear,
Would as soon chuse to have the *Spaniards* here.
'Tis true, you've marks enough, the plot, the show,
The poet's scenes, nay more, the painter's too;
If all this fail, considering the cost,
'Tis a true voyage to the *Indies* lost:
But if you smile on all, then these designs,
Like the imperfect treasure of our minds,
Will pass for current wherefoe'er they go,
When to your bounteous hand, their stamps they owe.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* INDIAN EMPEROR.

Almighty Criticks! Whom our *Indians* here
Worship, just as they do the Devil, for fear;
In reverence to your pow'r I come this day
To give you timely warning of our play.
The scenes are old, the habits are the same
We wore last year, before the *Spaniards* came.
Now, if you stay, the blood that shall be shed
From this poor play, be all upon your head.
We neither promise you one dance, or show,
Then plot and language, they are wanting too:
But you kind wits will those light faults excuse:
Those are the common frailties of the muse,
Which who observes he buys his place too dear:
For 'tis your business to be cozen'd here.
These wretched spies of wit must then confess
They take more pains to please themselves the less.
Grant us such judges, *Phæbus*, we request,
As still mistake themselves into a jest;
Such easy judges, that our poet may
Himself admire the fortune of his play;
And arrogantly, as his fellows do,
Think he writes well, because he pleases you.
This he conceives not hard to bring about,
If all of you would join to help him out.
Would each man take but what he understands,
And leave the rest upon the poet's hands.

EPILOGUE to the INDIAN EMPEROR.

Spoken by a MERCURY.

TO all and singular in this full Meeting,
 Ladies and gallants, *Phæbus* sends you greeting.
 To all his sons, by whate'er title known,
 Whether of court, of coffee-house, or town;
 From his most mighty sons, whose confidence
 Is plac'd in lofty sound and humble sense,
 E'en to his little infants of the time
 Who write new songs, and trust in tune and rhyme.
 Be't known that *Phæbus* (being daily griev'd
 To see good plays condemn'd, and bad receiv'd,)
 Ordains your judgment upon every cause,
 Henceforth be limited by wholesome laws.
 He first thinks fit no Sonneteer advance
 His censure, farther than the song or dance.
 Your Wit Burlesque may one step higher climb,
 And in his sphere may judge all doggrel rhyme:
 All *proves*, and *moves*, and *loves*, and *honours* too;
 All that appears high sense, and scarce is low.
 As for the Coffee-Wits he says not much,
 Their proper bus'ness is to damn the *Dutch*.
 For the great Dons of wit — — —
Phæbus gives them full privilege alone
 To damn all others, and cry up their own.
 Last, for the Ladies, 'tis *Apollo's* will,
 They should have pow'r to save, but not to kill:
 For Love and He long since have thought it fit,
 Wit live by Beauty, Beauty reign by Wit.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* SECRET LOVE, or the MAIDEN QUEEN.

HE who writ this, not without pains and thought,
 From *French*, and *English* theatres has brought,
 Th' exactest rules, by which a play is wrought.
 The unities of action, place, and time;
 The scenes unbroken; and a mingled chime
 Of *Johnson's* humour, with *Corneille's* rhyme.
 But while dead colours he with care did lay,
 He fears his wit, or plot he did not weigh,
 Which are the living beauties of a play.
 Plays are like towns, which howe'er fortify'd
 By Engineers, have still some weaker side
 By the o'erseen defendant unespied.
 And with that art you make approaches now;
 Such skilful fury in assaults you show,
 That every poet without shame may bow.
 Our's therefore humbly would attend your doom,
 If soldier like, he may have terms to come
 With flying colours, and with beat of drum.

*[The Prologue goes out, and stays while a tune is played,
 after which he returns again.]*

SECOND PROLOGUE.

I Had forgot one half I do protest,
 And now am sent again to speak the rest.
 He bows to every great and noble wit:
 But to the little *Hectors* of the pit
 Our poet's sturdy, and will not submit.
 He'll be beforehand with them, and not stay
 To see each peevish critick stab his play:

Each puny cenfor, who his skill to boast,
Is cheaply witty on the poet's cost.
No critick's verdict, should, of right, stand good,
They are excepted all as Men of Blood :
And the same law should shield him from their fury,
Which has excluded Butchers from a Jury.
You'd all be wits — — — —
But writing's tedious, and that way may fail;
The most compendious method is to rail:
Which you so like, you think yourselves ill us'd,
When in smart prologues you are not abus'd.
A civil prologue is approv'd by no man;
You hate it as you do a civil woman:
Your fancy's pall'd, and liberally you pay
To have it quickned, e'er you see a play:
Just as old sinners worn from their delight,
Give money to be whipt to appetite.
But what a pox keep I so much ado
To save our poet? he is one of you;
A brother judgment, and as I hear say,
A cursed critic as e'er damn'd a play.
Good savage gentlemen! your own kind spare,
He is like you, a very wolf or bear;
Yet think not he'll your ancient rights invade,
Or stop the course of your free damning trade:
For he, (he vows) at no friend's play can sit,
But he must needs find fault to shew his wit:
Then, for his sake, ne'er stint your own delight;
Throw boldly, for he sits to all that write;
With such he ventures on an even lay,
For they bring ready money into play.
Those who write not, and yet all writers nick,
Are bankrupt gamesters, for they damn on tick.

EPILOGUE

To the MAIDEN QUEEN: By a Person of Honour.

OUR Poet something doubtful of his fate,
 Made choice of me to be his advocate,
 Relying on my Knowledge in the Laws,
 And I as boldly undertook the cause.
 I left my client yonder in a rant
 Against the envious, and the ignorant,
 Who are, he says, his only enemies:
 But he contemns their malice, and defies
 The sharpest of his censurers to say
 Where there is one gross fault in all his play.
 The language is so fitted for each part,
 The plot according to the rules of art;
 And twenty other things he bid me tell ye,
 But I cry'd, e'en go do't yourself for *Nelly* †.
 Reason with judges, urg'd in the defence
 Of those they would condemn, is insolence;
 I therefore wave the merits of his play,
 And think it fit to plead this safer way.
 If when too many in the purchase share
 Robbing's not worth the danger nor the care;
 The men of business, must in policy,
 Cherish a little harmless poetry:
 All wit would else grow up to knavery.
 Wit is a bird of musick, or of prey,
 Mounting she strikes at all things in her way;
 But if this birdlime once but touch her wings,
 On the next bush she sits her down and sings.
 I have but one word more; tell me I pray
 What you will get by damning of our play?

† Spoken by *Nell Gwynne*.

A whipt fanatick who does not recant
 Is by his brethren call'd a suff'ring saint;
 And by your hands should this poor poet die
 Before he does renounce his poetry,
 His death must needs confirm the party more
 Than all his scribbling life could do before.
 Where so much zeal does in a sect appear,
 'Tis to no purpose, 'faith, to be severe.
 But 'tother day I heard this rhyming fop
 Say Criticks were the Whips, and He the Top;
 For, as a Top spins more the more you baste her,
 So every lash you give, He writes the faster.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* Sir MARTIN MARR-ALL.

FOOLS, which each man meets in his dish each day.
 Are yet the great regalia's of a play;
 In which to poets you but just appear,
 To prize that highest which cost them so dear:
 Fops in the town more easily will pass;
 One story makes a statutable ass:
 But such in plays must be much thicker sown,
 Like yolks of eggs, a dozen beat to one.
 Observing poets all their walks invade,
 As men watch woodcocks gliding through a glade:
 And when they have enough for Comedy,
 They stow their several bodies in a pie:
 The poet's but the cook to fashion it,
 For, gallants, you yourselves have found the wit.
 To bid you welcome would your bounty wrong,
 None welcome those who bring their chear along.

E P I L O G U E

- To Sir MARTIN MAR-ALL.

AS country vicars, when the sermon's done,
 Run huddling to the benediction;
 Well knowing, though the better sort may stay,
 The vulgar rout will run unblest away:
 So we, when once our play is done, make haste
 With a short epilogue to close your taste.
 In thus withdrawing we seem mannerly,
 But when the curtain's down we peep, and see
 A jury of the wits who still stay late,
 And in their club decree the poor play's fate;
 Their verdict back is to the boxes brought,
 Thence all the town pronounces it their thought.
 Thus, gallants, we like *Lilly* can foresee;
 But if you ask us what our doom will be,
 We by to-morrow will our fortune cast,
 As he tells all things when the year is past.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* TEMPEST.

AS when a tree's cut down the secret root
 Lives underground, and thence new branches shoot;
 So, from old *Shakespeare's* honour'd dust, this day
 Springs up and buds a new reviving play.
Shakespeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
 To *Fletcher* wit, to labouring *Johnson* art.
 He monarch-like gave those his subjects law,
 And is that nature which they paint and draw.

Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,
 Whilst *Johnson* crept and gather'd all below.

This did his love, and this his mirth digest :

One imitates him most, the other best.

If they have since out-writ all other men,

'Tis with the drops which fell from *Shakespear's* pen.

The storm which vanish'd on the neighb'ring shore,

Was taught by *Shakespear's* Tempest first to roar.

That innocence and beauty which did smile

In *Fletcher*, grew on this *Enchanted Isle*.

But *Shakespear's* magick could not copy'd be,

Within that circle none durst walk but He.

I must confess 'twas bold, nor would you now,

That liberty to vulgar wits allow,

Which works by magick supernatural things :

But *Shakespear's* pow'r is sacred as a king's.

Those legends from old priest-hood were receiv'd,

And he then writ, as people then believ'd.

But, if for *Shakespear* we your grace implore,

We for our theatre shall want it more :

Who by our dearth of youths are forc'd t' employ

One of our women to present a boy.

And that's a transformation you will say

Exceeding all the magick in the play.

Let none expect in the last act to find,

Her sex transform'd from man to woman-kind.

Whate'er she was before the play began,

All you shall see of her is perfect man.

Or if your fancy will be farther led,

To find her woman, it must be in bed.

EPILOGUE

To the TEMPEST.

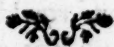
GALLANTS, by all good signs it does appear,
 That Sixty Seven's a very damning year,
 For knaves abroad, and for ill poets here.
 Among the Muses there's a gen'ral rot,
 The rhyming Monsieur and the Spanish plot:
 Desie or court, all's one, they go to pot.
 The ghosts of poets walk within this place,
 And haunt us actors wheresoe'er we pass,
 In visions bloodier than king *Richard's* was.
 For this poor wretch he has not much to say
 But quietly brings in his part o' th' play,
 And begs the favour to be damn'd to-day.
 He sends me only like a Shrieve's man here
 To let you know the malefactor's near;
 And that he means to die, *en Cavalier*.
 For if you should be gracious to his pen,
 Th' example will prove ill to other men,
 And you'll be troubled with them all agen.

PROLOGUE

To Dryden's MOCK ASTROLOGER.

WHEN first Our Poet set himself to write,
 Like a young bridegroom on his wedding-night
 He laid about him, and did so bestir him,
 His Muse could never lie in quiet for him:
 But now his honey-moon is gone and past,
 Yet the ungrateful drudgery must last:

And he is bound, as civil husbands do,
To strain himself, in complaisance to you:
To write in pain and counterfeit a Bliss,
Like the faint smacking of an after-kiss.
But you, like wives ill pleas'd, supply his want;
Each writing *Monfieur*, is a fresh Gallant:
And though, perhaps, 'twas done as well before,
Yet still there's something in a new amour.
Your several poets work with several tools,
One gets you wits, another gets you fools:
This pleases you with some bye-stroke of wit,
This finds some cranny that was never hit.
But should these janty lovers daily come
To do your work, like your good man at home,
Their fine small-timber'd wits would soon decay;
These are gallants but for a holiday.
Others you had who oftner have appear'd,
Whom, for meer impotence you have cashier'd:
Such as at first came on with pomp and glory,
But, over-straining, soon fell flat before ye.
Their uselefs weight, with patience long was born,
But at the last you threw them off with scorn.
As for the poet of this present night,
Though now he claims in you a husband's right,
He will not hinder you of fresh delight.
He, like a seaman, seldom will appear;
And means to trouble home but thrice a year:
That only time from your gallants he'll borrow;
Be kind to-day, and cuckold him to-morrow.



E P I L O G U E

To the Mock ASTROLOGER.

MY part being small, I have had time to-day,
 To mark your various censures of our play :
 First, looking for a judgment or a wit,
 Like *Jews* I saw 'em scatter'd through the pit :
 And where a knot of smilers lent an ear
 To one that talk'd, I knew the foe was there.
 The club of jests went round ; he who had none
 Borrow'd o' th' next, and told it for his own :
 Among the rest they kept a fearful stir,
 In whisp'ring that he stole th' *Astrologer* ;
 And said betwixt a *French* and *English* plot
 He eas'd his half-tir'd muse, on pace and trot.
 Up starts a *Monsieur*, new come o'er ; and warm
 In the *French* stoop ; and the pull-back o' th' arm ;
Morbleu dit il, and cocks, I am a rogue
 But he has quite spoil'd the *Feign'd Astrologue*.
 'Pox, says another ; here's so great a stir
 With a son of a whore farce that's regular,
 A rule where nothing must *decorum* shock !
 Damn me 'ts as dull as dining by the clock.
 An evening ! why the devil should we be vex't,
 Whether he gets the wench this night or next ?
 When I heard this, I to the poet went,
 Told him the house was full of discontent,
 And ask'd him what excuse he could invent.
 He neither swore or storm'd as poets do,
 But, most unlike an author, vow'd 'twas true.
 Yet said, he us'd the *French* like enemies,
 And did not steal their plots, but made 'em prize.

But should he all the pains and charges count
 Of taking them, the bill so high would mount,
 That like prize goods, which through the office come,
 He could have had them much more cheap at home.
 He still must write; and banker-like, each day
 Accept new bills, and he must break, or pay.
 When through his hands such sums must yearly run,
 You cannot think the stock is all his own.
 His haste his other errors might excuse;
 But there's no mercy for a guilty Muse:
 For like a mistress, she must stand or fall,
 And please you to a height, or not at all.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* TYRANNICK LOVE.

SELF-love (which never rightly understood)
 Makes poets still conclude their plays are good;
 And malice in all criticks runs so high,
 That for small errors, they whole plays decry;
 So that to see this fondness, and that spite,
 You'd think that none but mad-men judge or write.
 Therefore Our Poet, as he thinks not fit
 To impose upon you what he writes, for wit,
 So hopes that leaving you your censures free
 You equal judges of the whole will be:
 They judge but half who only faults will see.
 Poets, like lovers, should be bold and dare,
 They spoil their business with an over-care:
 And he who servilely creeps after sense,
 Is safe, but ne'er will reach an excellence.
 Hence 'tis, our poet in his conjuring,
 Allow'd his fancy the full scope and swing.

But when a tyrant for his theme he had,
 He loos'd the reins and bid his muse run mad:
 And though he stumbles in a full career;
 Yet rashness is a better fault than fear.
 He saw his way; but in so swift a pace,
 'To chuse the ground, might be to lose the race.
 They then who of each trip th' advantage take,
 Find but those faults which they want wit to make.

E P I L O G U E

To the TYRANNICK LOVE.

Spoken by Mrs. *Ellen Gwynne*, when she was to be
 carried off dead.

HOLD are you mad? you damn'd confounded dog,
 I am to rise and speak the Epilogue. [*To the bearer.*
To the Audience.] I'm come, kind gentlemen, strange
 news to tell ye,

I am the ghost of poor departed *Nelly*.
 Sweet ladies, be not frightened, I'll be civil,
 I'm what I was, a little harmless devil.
 For after death, we sprights have just such natures,
 We had for all the world, when human creatures;
 And therefore I that was an actress here,
 Play all my tricks in hell, a goblin there.
 Gallants look to't, you say there are no sprights;
 But I'll come dance about your beds at nights.
 And faith you'll be in a sweet kind of taking,
 When I surprise you between sleep and waking.
 To tell you true, I walk because I die
 Out of my calling, in a tragedy.
 O poet! damn'd dull poet, who could prove
 So senseless to make *Nelly* die for love:

Nay what's yet worse, to kill me in the prime
 Of *Easter* term, in tart and cheesecake-time :
 I'll fit the fop, for I'll not one word say
 T' excuse his godly, out-of-fashion play.
 A play, which if you dare but twice fit out,
 You'll all be slander'd, and be thought devout.
 But farewell, gentlemen, make haste to me,
 I'm sure e'er long to have your company.
 As for my epitaph, when I am gone,
 I'll trust no poet, but will write my own.

*Here Nelly lies, who, though she liv'd a flatern,
 Yet dy'd a princess acting in St. Cath'rin.*

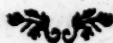
P R O L O G U E

To the First Part of *Dryden's CONQUEST OF GRANADA.*

Spoken by Mrs. *Ellen Guyn*, in a broad-brimm'd
 Hat, and Waist-belt.

THIS jest was first of th' other house's making,
 And five times try'd has never fail'd of taking.
 For, 'twere a shame a poet should be kill'd
 Under the shelter of so broad a shield.
 This is that Hat, whose very sight did win ye
 To laugh and clap as though the devil were in ye.
 As then, for *Nokes*, so now I hope you'll be
 So dull, to laugh once more for love of me.
 I'll write a play says one, for I have got
 A broad-brim'd Hat, and Waist-belt towards a plot.
 Says th' other, I have one more large than that.
 Thus they out-write each other with a hat.
 The brims still grew with every play they writ;
 And grew so large they cover'd all the wit.

Hat was the play: 'twas language, wit and tale:
 Like them that find meat, drink, and cloth in ale.
 What dulness do these mungrel wits confess,
 When all their hope is acting of a dress!
 Thus, Two the best comedians of the age
 Must be worn out, with being blocks o' th' stage;
 Like a young girl, who better things has known,
 Beneath their poet's impotence they groan.
 See now what charity it was to save?
 They thought you lik'd what only you forgave:
 And brought you more dull sense, dull sense much worse
 Than brisk gay nonsense, and the heavier curse.
 They bring old ir'n and glass upon the stage,
 To barter with the *Indians* of our age.
 Still they write on, and like great authors shew:
 But 'tis as rollers in wet gardens grow
 Heavy with dirt, and gathering as they go. }
 May none who have so little understood
 To like such trash, presume to praise what's good!
 And may those drudges of the stage, whose fate
 Is damn'd dull farce more dully to translate,
 Fall under that excise the state thinks fit
 To set on all *French* wares, whose worst is wit.
French farce worn out at home, is sent abroad;
 And patch'd up here, is made our *English* mode.
 Henceforth let poets, e'er allow'd to write,
 Be search'd, like duellists, before they fight,
 For wheel-broad hats, dull humour, all that chaff
 Which makes you mourn, and makes the vulgar laugh:
 For these, in plays, are as unlawful arms,
 As in a combat, coats of mail, and charms.



EPILOGUE

To the First Part of the CONQUEST of GRANADA.

SUCCESS, which can no more than beauty last,
 Makes our sad poet mourn your favours past:
 For, since without desert he got a name,
 He fears to lose it now with greater shame.
 Fame like a little mistress of the town,
 Is gain'd with ease; but then she's lost as soon.
 For, as those tawdry misses, soon or late
 Jilt such as keep them at the highest rate,
 (And oft the lacquey or the brawny clown,
 Gets what is hid in the loose body'd gown;) }
 So, Fame is false to all that keep her long;
 And turns up to the fop that's brisk and young.
 Some wiser poet now would leave Fame first:
 But elder wits are, like old lovers, curst;
 Who, when the vigour of their youth is spent,
 Still grow more fond as they grow impotent.
 This, some years hence, our poet's case may prove;
 But, yet, he hopes, he's young enough to love.
 When forty comes, if e'er he lives to see
 That wretched fumbling age of poetry,
 'Twill be high time to bid his Muse adieu:
 Well he may please himself, but never you.
 'Till then he'll do as well as he began;
 And hopes you will not find him less a man.
 Think him not duller for this year's delay;
 He was prepar'd, the women were away; }
 And men, without *their* parts, can hardly play.
 If they, through sickness, seldom did appear, }
 Pity the virgins of each theatre;
 For, at both houses, 'twas a sickly year! }

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And pity us, your servants, to whose cost,
 In one such sickness, nine whole months are lost.
 Their stay, he fears, has ruin'd what he writ:
 Long waiting both disables love and wit.
 They thought they gave him leisure to do well:
 But when they forc'd him to attend, he fell!
 Yet though he much has fail'd, he begs to-day
 You will excuse his unperforming play:
 Weakness sometimes great passion does express;
 He had pleas'd better, had he lov'd you less.

P R O L O G U E

To the Second Part of the CONQUEST of GRANADA.

THEY who write ill, and they who ne'er durst write,
 Turn Criticks out of mere revenge and spite.
 A Playhouse gives 'em fame; and up there starts,
 From a mean fifth-rate wit, a man of parts.
 (So common faces on the stage appear:
 We take 'em in; and they turn beauties here)
 Our author fears those Criticks as his fate:
 And those he fears, by consequence, must hate.
 For they the traffick of all wit invade;
 As scriv'ners draw away the banker's trade.
 Howe'er, the poet's safe enough to-day:
 They cannot censure an unfinish'd play.
 But, as when vizard mask appears in pit,
 Straight, every man who thinks himself a wit,
 Perks up, and managing his comb, with grace,
 With his white wig sets off his nut-brown face:
 That done, bears up to th' prize, and views each limb;
 To know her by her rigging and her trim:

Then, the whole noise of fops to wagers go,
Pox on her, 't must be she; and *dam' me* no;
 Just so I prophesy these wits to day
 Will blindly guess at our imperfect play:
 With what new plots our second part is fill'd;
 Who must be kept alive, and who be kill'd.
 And as those vizard masks maintain that fashion,
 To sooth and tickle sweet imagination;
 So, our dull poet keeps you on with masking,
 To make you think there's something worth your asking:
 But when 'tis shewn, that which does now delight you,
 Will prove a dowdy with a face to fright you.

EPILOGUE

To the Second Part of the CONQUEST of GRANADA.

THEY, who have best succeeded on the stage,
 Have still conform'd their genius to their age.
 Thus *Johnson* did mechanick humour show,
 When men were dull, and conversation low.
 Then, comedy was faultless, but 'twas coarse:
Cobb's Tankard was a jest, and *Otter's* Horse.
 And as their comedy, their love was mean;
 Except, by chance, in some one labour'd scene,
 Which must attone for an ill-written play.
 They rose; but at their height could seldom stay.
 Fame then was cheap, and the first-come sped;
 And they have kept it since, by being dead.
 But were they *now* to write, when criticks weigh
 Each line, and ev'ry word, throughout a play,
 None of them, no not *Johnson* in his height,
 Could pass without allowing grains for weight.

Think it not envy that these truths are told;
 Our Poet's not malicious, though he's bold.
 'Tis not to brand 'em that their faults are shewn,
 But by their errors to excuse his own.
 If love and honour now are higher rais'd,
 'Tis not the poet but the age are prais'd.
 Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree;
 Our native language more refin'd and free.
 Our ladies and our men now speak more wit
 In conversation, than those poets writ:
 Then, one of these is, consequently, true;
 That what this poet writes comes short of you,
 And imitates you ill, (which most he fears)
 Or else his writing is not worse than theirs.
 Yet though you judge, (as sure the criticks will)
 That some before him writ with greater skill;
 In this one praise he has their fame surpass,
 To please an age more gallant than the last.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.

LORD, how reform'd and quiet are we grown,
 Since all our Braves, and all our Wits are gone!
 Fop-Corner now is free from civil war:
 White wig and vizard make no longer jar.
 France and the fleet, have swept the town so clear,
 That we can act in peace, and you can hear.
 'Twas a sad sight before they march'd from home,
 To see our warriors in red waistcoats, come,
 With hair tuck'd up, into our tiring-room.
 But 'twere more sad to hear their last adieu;
 The women sob'd, and swore they would be true;

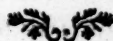
And so they were as long as e'er they cou'd:
 But powerful Guinea cannot be withstood,
 And they were made of Playhouse flesh and blood.
 Fate did their friends for double use ordain,
 In wars abroad, they grinning honour gain,
 And mistresses for all that stay maintain.
 Now they are gone, 'tis dead vacation here,
 For neither friends nor enemies appear.
 Poor pensive punk now peeps 'ere plays begin,
 Sees the bare bench, and dares not venture in:
 But manages her last half crown with care,
 And trudges to the Mall on foot for air.
 Our city friends so far will hardly come;
 They can take up with pleasures nearer home;
 And see gay shows, and gaudy scenes elsewhere:
 For we presume they seldom come to hear.
 But they have now ta'en up a glorious trade,
 And cutting Moorcraft struts in masquerade.
 There's all our hope, for we shall shew to-day,
 A masking ball, to recommend our play.
 Nay, to endear 'em more, and let 'em see,
 We scorn to come behind in courtesy,
 We'll follow the new mode which they begin,
 And treat 'em with a room and couch, within:
 For that's one way, howe'er the play fall short,
 T'oblige the town, the city, and the court.

EPILOGUE

TO MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.

THUS have my spouse and I inform'd the nation,
 And led you all the way to reformation.
 Not with dull morals, gravely writ, like those,
 Which men of easy phlegm, with care compose:

Your poets of stiff words and limber sense,
Born on the confines of indifference.
But by examples drawn, I dare to say,
From most of you, who hear, and see the play.
There are more Rhodophils in this theatre,
More Palamedes, and some few wives I fear.
But yet too far our poet would not run;
Though 'twas well offer'd, there was nothing done.
He would not quite the woman's frailty bare,
But stript 'em to the waste, and left 'em there.
And the men's faults are less severely shown,
For he considers that himself is one.
Some stabbing wits, to bloody satire bent,
Would treat both sexes with less compliment:
Would lay the scene at home, of husbands tell,
For wenches, taking up their wives i' th' Mell,
And a brisk bout, which each of them did want,
Made by mistake of mistress and gallant.
Our modest author thought it was enough
'To cut you off a sample of the stuff:
He spar'd my shame, which you, I'm sure would not,
For you were all for driving on the plot:
You sigh'd when I came in to break the sport,
And set your teeth when each design fell short.
To wives and servants all good wishes lend,
But the poor cuckold seldom finds a friend.
Since therefore court and town will take no pity,
I humbly cast myself upon the city.



P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* LOVE IN A NUNNERY.

PROLOGUES, like bells to churches, toll you in
 With chiming verse till the dull plays begin :
 With this sad difference though of pit and pew,
 You damn the Poet but the Priest damns you.
 But Priests can treat you at your own expence :
 And, gravely, call you fools, without offence.
 Poets, poor devils, have ne'er your folly shown
 But, to their cost, you prov'd it was their own.
 For, when a fop's presented on the stage,
 Strait all the coxcombs in the town engage :
 For his deliverance, and revenge they join :
 And grunt like hogs about their captive swine.
 Your poets daily split upon this shelf :
 You must have fools, yet none will have himself.
 Or, if in kindness, you that leave would give,
 No man could write you at that rate you live :
 For some of you grow fops with so much haste,
 Riot in nonsense, and commit such waste,
 'Twould ruin poets should they spend so fast.
 He who made this, observ'd what Farces hit,
 And durst not disoblige you now with Wit.
 But, gentlemen, you over-do the mode :
 You must have fools out of the common road.
 Th' unnatural strain'd buffoon is only taking :
 No fop can please you now of God's own making.
 Pardon our poet if he speaks his mind,
 You come to plays with your own follies lin'd.
 Small fools fall on you, like small showers, in vain :
 Your own oil'd coats keep out all common rain,

You must have *Mamamouchi*, such a fop
 As would appear a Monster in a shop;
 He'll fill your pit, and boxes to the brim,
 Where, ram'd in crowds, you see yourselves in him.
 Sure there's some spell our poet never knew,
 In *Hullibabilab de*, and *Cbu, cbu, cbu*.
 But *Marabarab sabem* most did touch you,
 That is: Oh how we love the *Mamamouchi*!
 Grimace and habit sent you pleas'd away:
 You damn'd the poet, and cry'd up the play.

This thought had made our author more uneasy,
 But that he hopes I'm fool enough to please ye.
 But here's my grief; though nature join'd with art,
 Have cut me out to act a fooling part;
 Yet, to your praise, the few wits here will say,
 'Twas imitating you taught *Haynes* to play.

E P I L O G U E

TO LOVE IN A NUNNERY.

SOME have expected from our bills to-day,
 To find a satire in our poet's play.
 The zealous rout from Coleman-street did run.
 To see the story of the Friar and Nun.
 Or tales, yet more ridiculous to hear,
 Vouch'd by their vicar of ten pounds a year;
 Of Nuns, who did against temptation pray,
 And discipline laid on the pleasant way:
 Or that to please the malice of the town,
 Our poet should in some close cell have shewn
 Some sister playing at content alone. }
 This they did hope; the other side did fear:
 And both, you see, alike are cozen'd here.

Some thought the title of our play to blame;
 They lik'd the thing, but yet abhor'd the name:
 Like modest punks, who all you ask afford,
 But for the world they would not name that word.
 Yet, if you'll credit what I heard him say,
 Our poet meant no scandal in his play;
 His Nuns are good which on the stage are shown,
 And sure behind our Scenes you'll look for none.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* AMBOYNA.

AS needy gallants, in the scriv'ners hands,
 Court the rich knave that gripes their mortgag'd
 The first fat buck of all the season's sent (lands,
 And keeper takes no fee in compliment:
 The dotage of some Englishmen is such,
 To fawn on those who ruin them, the Dutch.
 They shall have all, rather than make a war
 With those who of the same religion are.
 The Streights, the Guiney trade, the Herrings too,
 Nay, to keep freindship, they shall pickle you.
 Some are resolv'd not to find out the cheat,
 But, cuckold-like, love him who does the feat.
 What injuries so'er upon us fall,
 Yet still the same religion answers all.
 Religion wheedled you to civil war,
 Drew English blood, and Dutchmens now would spare.
 Be gull'd no longer, for you'll find it true.
 They have no more religion, faith — than you.
 Interest's the God they worship in their state,
 And you, I take it, have not much of that.

Well Monarchies may own religion's name,
 But States are atheists in their very frame.
 They share a sin, and such proportions fall,
 That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to 'em all.
 How they love England, you shall see this day:
 No map shews Holland truer than our play.
 Their pictures and inscriptions well we know;
 We may be bold one medal sure to shew.
 View then their falsehoods, rapine, cruelty;
 And think what once they were, they still would be:
 But hope not either language, plot, or art;
 'Twas writ in haste, but with an English heart:
 And less hope wit in Dutchmen; that would be
 As much improper as would honesty.

E P I L O G U E

TO AMBOYNA.

A Poet once the Spartans led to fight,
 And made 'em conquer in the Muse's right:
 So would our poet lead you on this day,
 Shewing your tortur'd fathers in his play.
 To one well-born, th' affront is worse and more,
 When he's abus'd and baffled by a boor.
 With an ill grace the Dutch their mischief do;
 They've both ill nature, and ill manners too.
 Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation;
 For they were bred ere manners were in fashion:
 And their new commonwealth has set them free,
 Only from honour and civility.
 Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
 Than did their lubber-state mankind bestride.

Their sway became 'em with as ill a mien,
 As their own paunches swell above their chin :
 Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,
 And only two king's touch can cure the tumour.
 As Cato did his Africk fruits display :
 So we before your eyes their Indies lay.
 All loyal English will like him conclude ;
 Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdu'd.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* AURENGE ZEBE, or the GREAT MOGUL.

OUR author by experience finds it true,
 'Tis much more hard to please himself, than you :
 And out of no feign'd modesty, this day,
 Damns his laborious trifle of a play :
 Not that it's worse than what before he writ,
 But he has now another taste of wit ;
 And to confess a truth, (though out of time)
 Grows weary of his long-lov'd mistress, Rhime.
 Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
 And Nature flies him like enchanted ground.
 What verse can do he has perform'd in this,
 Which he presumes the most correct of his.
 But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
 Invades his breast at Shakespear's sacred name :
 Aw'd when he hears his god-like Romans rage,
 He, in a just despair, would quit the stage.
 And to an age less polish'd, more unskill'd,
 Does, with disdain, the foremost honours yield.
 As with the greater dead he dares not strive,
 He would not match his verse with those who live :

Let him retire, betwixt two ages cast,
 The first of this and hindmost of the last.
 A losing gamester let him sneak away;
 He bears no ready money from the play.
 The fate which governs poets thought it fit,
 He should not raise his fortunes by his wit.
 The clergy thrive, and the litigious bar;
 Dull heroes fatten with the spoils of war;
 All southern vices, heav'n be prais'd, are here;
 But wit's a luxury you think too dear.
 When you to cultivate the plant are loth,
 'Tis a shrewd sign 'twas never of your growth:
 And wit in northern climates will not blow,
 Except, like Orange-trees, 'tis hous'd from snow.
 There needs no care to put a play-house down,
 'Tis the most desert place of all the town.
 We and our neighbours, to speak proudly, are
 Like monarchs, ruin'd with expensive war.
 While, like wise English, unconcern'd, you sit,
 And see us play the Tragedy of Wit.

E P I L O G U E

TO AURENCE ZEBE, or the GREAT MOGUL.

A Pretty task! and so I told the fool,
 Who needs would undertake to please by rule.
 He thought that if his characters were good,
 The scenes entire, and freed from noise and blood.
 The action great, yet circumscrib'd by time,
 The words not forc'd, but sliding into Rhime,
 The passions rais'd and calm'd by just degrees,
 As tides are swell'd; and then retire to seas.

He thought, in hitting these, his bus'ness done,
 Though he, perhaps, has fail'd in ev'ry one.
 But, after all, a poet must confess,
 His art's like physick, but a happy guess.
 Your pleasure on your fancy must depend:
 The lady's pleas'd, just as she likes her friend.
 No song! no dance! no shew! he fears you'll say,
 You love all naked beauties but a play.
 He much mistakes your methods to delight;
 And, like the French, abhors our target fight:
 But those damn'd dogs can never be i' th' right. }
 True English hate your Monsieur's paultry arts;
 For you are all silk-weavers in your hearts.
 Bold Britons, at a brave bear-garden fray,
 Are rous'd: and clattering sticks, cry, *play, play, play.*
 Mean time, your filthy foreigner will stare,
 And mutter to himself, *Ha gens barbare!*
 And, Gad, 'tis well he mutters; well for him;
 Our butchers else would tear him limb from limb.
 'Tis true, the time may come, your sons may be
 Infected with this French civility.
 But this in after ages will be done:
 Our poet writes an hundred years too soon.
 This age comes on too slow, or he too fast:
 And early springs are subject to a blast!
 Who would excel, when few can make a test
 Betwixt indiff'rent writing and the best?
 For favours cheap and common who would strive,
 Which, like abandon'd prostitutes, you give?
 Yet scatter'd here and there, I some behold,
 Who can discern the tinsel from the gold.
 To these he writes; and if by them allow'd,
 'Tis their prerogative to rule the crowd.
 For he more fears, (like a presuming man)
 Their votes who cannot judge, than theirs who can.

P R O L O G U E.

To *Dryden's* ALL for LOVE, or the WORLD WELL LOST.

WHAT flocks of criticks hover here to-day,
 As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
 All gaping for the carcass of a play!
 With croaking notes they bode some dire event;
 And follow dying poets by the scent.
 Ours gives himself for gone; y'ave watch'd your time!
 He fights this day unarm'd, without his rhyme;
 And brings a tale which often has been told;
 As sad as Dido's, and almost as old.
 His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
 Bates of his mettle, and scarce rants at all:
 He's somewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
 Weeps much; fights little; and is wondrous kind.
 In short, a patron, and companion fit,
 For all the keeping Tonies of the pit.
 I could name more; a wife, and mistress too:
 Both (to be plain) too good for most you:
 The wife well-natur'd, and the mistress true.

Now, poets, if your fame has been his care;
 Allow him all the candour you can spare.
 A brave man scorns to quarrel once a day;
 Like Hectors, in at every petty fray:
 Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
 They've need to shew that they can think at all:
 Errors like straws upon the surface flow;
 He who would search for pearls must dive below.
 Fops may have leave to level all they can;
 As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.

Half-wits are fleas; so little and so light;
 We scarce could know they live, but that they bite.
 But, as the rich, when tir'd with daily feasts,
 For change, become their next poor tenant's guests;
 Drink hearty draughts of ale, from plain brown bowls,
 And snatch the homely rasher from the coals:
 So you, retiring from much better cheer,
 For once may venture to do penance here.
 And since that plenteous autumn now is past,
 Whose grapes and peaches have indulg'd your taste,
 Take in good part from our poor poet's board,
 Such rivell'd fruits as winter can afford.

EPILOGUE

TO ALL for LOVE, or the WORLD WELL LOST.

POETS, like disputants, when reasons fail,
 Have one sure refuge left; and that's to rail;
 Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thunder'd through the pit;
 And this is all their equipage of wit.
 We wonder how the devil this diff'rence grows,
 Betwixt our fools in verse, and yours in prose?
 For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly understood,
 'Tis civil war with their own flesh and blood.
 The thread-bare author hates the gaudy coat;
 And swears at the gilt coach, but swears a-foot:
 For 'tis observ'd of ev'ry scribbling man,
 He grows a fop as fast as e'er he can;
 Prunes up, and asks the oracle his glass,
 If pink or purple best becomes his face.
 For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays;
 Nor likes your wit just as you like his plays;
 He has not yet so much of Mr. Bayes.

He does his best; and if he cannot please,
 Would quietly sue out his Writ of Ease.
 Yet, if he might his own Grand Jury call,
 By the fair sex he begs to stand or fall.
 Let Cæsar's pow'r the men's ambition move,
 But grace you him who lost the World for Love.
 Yet if some antiquated ladies say,
 The last age is not copy'd in his play;
 Heav'n help the man who for that face must drudge,
 Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
 Let not the young and beauteous join with those;
 For should you raise such numerous hosts of foes,
 Young wits and sparks he to his aid must call;
 'Tis more than one man's work to please you all.

E P I L O G U E

To *Dryden's* LIMBERHAM, or the KIND KEEPER.

Spoken by LIMBERHAM.

I Beg a boon, that e're you all disband.
 Some one would take my bargain off my hand;
 To keep a punk is but a common evil,
 To find her false, and marry, that's the devil.
 Well, I ne'er acted part in all my life,
 But still I was fobb'd off with some such wife:
 I find the trick; these poets have no pity
 Of one that is a member of the city.
 We cheat you lawfully, and in our trades,
 You cheat us basely with your common jades.
 Now I am marry'd, I must sit down by it;
 But let me keep my dear-bought spouse in quiet:

Let none of you damn'd Woodalls of the pit,
 Put in for shares, to mend our breed in Wit;
 We know your bastards from our flesh and blood,
 Not one in ten of yours e'er comes to good;
 In all the boys their fathers virtues shine,
 But all the female fry turn Pugs like mine.
 When these grow up, lord! with what rampant gadders
 Our counters will be throng'd, and roads with padders.
 This town two bargains has, not worth one farthing,
 A Smithfield Horse, and Wife of Covent-Garden.

P R O L O G U E

To OEDIPUS; written by *Dryden* and *Lee*.

WHEN Athens all the Grecian State did guide,
 And Greece gave laws to all the world beside,
 Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,
 Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit;
 And Wit from Wisdom differ'd not in those,
 But as 'twas sung in verse, or said in prose.
 Then Oedipus on crowned Theatres,
 Drew all admiring eyes and listening ears;
 The pleas'd spectator shouted every line,
 The noblest, manliest, and the best design!
 And every critic of each learned age,
 By this just model has reform'd the stage.
 Now, should it fail, (as heav'n avert our fear!)
 Damn it in silence, lest the world should hear.
 For were it known this poem did not please,
 You might set up for perfect savages:
 Your neighbours would not look on you as men;
 But think the nation all turn'd Picts agen.

'Faith, as you manage matters 'tis not fit
 You should suspect yourselves of too much wit.
 Drive not the jest too far, but spare this piece:
 And for this once be not more wise than Greece.
 See twice! Do not pell-mell to damning fall,
 Like true-born Britons, who ne'er think at all:
 Pray be advis'd; and though at Mons you won,
 On pointed cannon do not always run.
 With some respect to ancient wit proceed;
 You take the four first councils for your Creed.
 But when you lay tradition wholly by,
 And on the private spirit alone rely,
 You turn fanaticks in your poetry.
 If, notwithstanding all that we can say,
 You needs will have your pen'worths of the Play:
 And come resolv'd to damn, because you pay,
 Record it, in memorial of the fact,
 The first Play buried since the Woollen Act.

E P I L O G U E

The Oedipus.

WHAT Sophocles could undertake alone,
 Our Poets found a work for more than one;
 And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,
 With all their force, to draw the pondrous mass from Greece.
 A weight that bent even Seneca's strong muse;
 And which Corneille's shoulders did refuse.
 So hard it is the Athenian harp to string!
 So much two consuls yield to one just king.
 Terror and pity this whole poem sway;
 The mightiest machines that can mount a Play:

How heavy will these vulgar souls be found,
 Whom two such engines cannot move from ground ?
 When Greece and Rome have smil'd upon this birth,
 You can but damn for one poor spot of earth :
 And when your children find your judgment such,
 They'll scorn their fires, and wish themselves born Dutch ;
 Each haughty poet will infer with ease,
 How much his wit must underwrite to please.
 As some strong churl would brandishing advance
 The monumental sword that conquer'd France ;
 So you, by judging this, your judgments teach,
 Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach,
 Since then the vote of full two thousand years
 Has crown'd this plot, and all the dead are theirs ;
 Think it a debt you pay, not alms you give,
 And in your own defence, let this play live.
 Think them not vain, when Sophocles is shewn,
 To praise his worth they humbly doubt their own.
 Yet as weak states each others pow'r assure,
 Weak poets, by conjunction are secure.
 Their treat is what your palates relish most,
 Charm ! song ! and shew ! a murder, and a ghost !
 We know not what you can desire or hope,
 To please you more, but burning of a Pope.



P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* TROILUS and CRESSIDA.

Spoken by Mr. Betterton, representing the Ghost of Shakespeare.

SEE my lov'd Britons, see your Shakespeare rise,
 An awful ghost confes'd to human eyes!
 Unnam'd, methinks, distinguish'd I had been,
 From other shades by this eternal green,
 About whose wreaths the vulgar poets strive,
 And with a touch their wither'd bays revive.
 Untaught, unpractis'd in a barbarous age,
 I found not but created first the stage.
 And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
 'Twas that my own abundance gave me more.
 On foreign trade I needed not rely,
 Like fruitful Britain, rich without supply.
 In this my roughdrawn play, you shall behold
 Some master-strokes, so manly and so bold,
 That he, who meant to alter, found them such,
 He shook; and thought it sacrilege to touch.
 Now, where are the successors to my name?
 What bring they to fill out a poet's fame?
 Weak, short-liv'd issues of a feeble age;
 Scarce living to be christen'd on the stage!
 For humour, farce; for love, they rhyme dispense,
 That tolls the knell for their departed sense,
 Dulness might thrive in any trade but this:
 'Twould recommend to some fat benefice.
 Dulness, that in a play-house meets disgrace,
 Might meet with rev'rence in it's proper place.

The fulsome clench that nauseates the town
 Would from a judge or alderman go down!
 Such virtue is there in a robe and gown!
 And that insipid stuff which here you hate,
 Might somewhere else be call'd a grave debate:
 Dulness is decent in the church and state.
 But I forgot that still 'tis understood,
 Bad plays are best decry'd by shewing good:
 Sit silent then, that my pleas'd soul may see
 A judging audience once, and worthy me:
 My faithful scene, from true records shall tell
 How Trojan valour did the Greek excel;
 Your great forefathers shall their fame regain,
 And Homer's angry ghost repine in vain.

EPILOGUE

TO TROILUS and CRESSIDA.

Spoken by Therfites.

THESE cruel criticks put me into passion;
 For in their lowring looks I read damnation:
 Ye expect a satyr, and I seldom fail,
 When I'm first beaten, 'tis my part to rail.
 You British fools of the old Trojan stock,
 That stand so thick one cannot miss the flock,
 Poets have cause to dread a keeping Pit,
 When womens cullies come to judge of wit.
 As we strew rats-bane when we vermin fear,
 'Twere worth our cost to scatter fools-bane here,
 And after all our judging fops were serv'd,
 Dull poets too should have a dose reserv'd;

Such reprobates as, past all sense of shaming,
 Write on, and ne'er are satisfy'd with damning.
 Next, those, to whom the stage does not belong,
 Such whose vocation only is to song;
 At most to Prologue, when, for want of time,
 Poets take in for Journey-work in rhyme.
 But I want curses for those mighty shoals
 Of scribbling Chlorises, and Phillis fools,
 Those Oaphs should be restrain'd, during their lives,
 From pen and ink, as madmen are from knives:
 I could rail on, but 'twere a task as vain
 As preaching truth at Rome, or wit in Spain;
 Yet to huff out our Play was worth my trying,
 John Lilburn 'scap'd his judges by defying:
 If guilty, yet I'm sure o'th' churches blessing,
 By suffering for the plot without confessing.

P R O L O G U E.

To *Dryden's* SPANISH FRIAR.

NOW luck for us, and a kind hearty pit;
 For he who pleases, never fails of wit:
 Honour is yours:
 And you, like kings, at city treats bestow it;
 The writer kneels, and is bid rise a poet:
 But you are fickle sovereigns, to our sorrow,
 You dubb to-day and hang a man to-morrow;
 To cry the same sense up, and down again,
 Just like brass money, once a year, in Spain:
 Take you i'th' mood, whate'er base metal come,
 You coin as fast as groats at Birmingham:
 Though 'tis no more like sense in antient plays,
 Than Rome's religion like St. Peter's days.

In short, so swift your judgments turn and wind,
You cast our fleetest wits a mile behind.
'Twere well your judgments but in plays did range,
But e'en your follies and debauches change
With such a whirl, the poets of our age
Are try'd, and cannot score them on the stage,
Unless each vice in short-hand they indite,
E'en as notcht prentices whole sermons write.
The heavy Hollanders no vices know,
But what they us'd a hundred years ago,
Like honest plants, where they were stuck, they grow; }
They cheat, but still from cheating fires they come;
They drink, but they were christ'ned first in mum.
Their patrimonial sloth the Spaniards keep,
And Philip first taught Philip how to sleep.
The French and we still change, but here's the curse,
They change for better, and we change for worse;
They take up our old trade of conquering,
And we are taking theirs, to dance and sing:
Our fathers did for change to France repair,
And they for change will try our English air.
As children, when they throw one toy away,
Strait a more foolish gewgaw comes in play:
So we, grown penitent, on serious thinking,
Leave whoring, and devoutly fall to drinking.
Scowring the watch grows out-of-fashion wit,
Now we set up for tilting in the pit,
Where 'tis agreed by bullies, chicken-hearted,
To fright the ladies first, and then be parted.
A fair attempt has twice or thrice been made,
To hire night-murd'ers, and make death a trade.
When murder's out, what vice can we advance?
Unless the new-found pois'ning trick of France:
And when their art of Ratsbane we have got,
By way of thanks, we'll send them e'er our Plot.

EPILOGUE.

To the SPANISH FRIAR. By a Friend of the Author's.

THERE's none, I'm sure, who is a friend to love,
 But will our Friar's character approve :
 The ablest spark among you sometimes needs,
 Such pious help for charitable deeds.
 Our church, alas ! (as Rome objects) does want
 These ghostly comforts for the falling Saint :
 This gains them their whore-converts, and may be
 One reason of the growth of Popery.
 So Mahomet's religion came in fashion,
 By the large leave it gave to fornication.
 Fear not the guilt, if you can pay for't well,
 There is no Dives in the Roman Hell.
 Gold opens the strait gate, and lets him in ;
 But want of money is a mortal sin.
 For all besides you may discount to Heaven,
 And drop a bead to keep the tallies even.
 How are men cozen'd still with shews of good !
 The bawd's best mask is the grave Friar's hood.
 Though vice no more a clergyman displeases,
 Than doctors can be thought to hate diseases :
 'Tis by your living ill that they live well,
 By your debauches their fat paunches swell.
 'Tis a mock-war between the Priest and Devil,
 When they think fit, they can be very civil.
 As some who did French counsels most advance,
 To blind the world, have rail'd in print at France.
 Thus do the clergy at your vices bawl,
 That with more ease they may engross them all.

By damning yours, they do their own maintain,
 A churchman's godliness is always gain.
 Hence to their Prince they will superior be ;
 And civil treason grows church-loyalty :
 They boast the gift of Heaven is in their power ;
 Well may they give the God they can devour.
 Still to the sick and dead their claims they lay ;
 For 'tis on carrion that the vermin prey.
 Nor have they less dominion on our life,
 They trot the husband, and they pace the wife.
 Rouze up, ye cuckolds of the northern climes,
 And learn from Sweden, to prevent such crimes.
 Unman the Friar, and leave the holy drone
 To hum, in his forsaken hive, alone ;
 He'll work no honey when his sting is gone.
 Your wives and daughters soon will leave the cells,
 When they have lost the sound of Aaron's bells.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden* and *Lee's* DUKE of GUISE.

OUR Play's a Parallel: the Holy League
 Begot our Cov'nant: Guisards got the Whig :
 Whate'er our hot-brain'd Sheriffs did advance,
 Was, like our fashions, first produc'd in France :
 And, when worn out, well scourg'd, and banish'd there,
 Sent over, like their godly beggars, here.
 Could the same trick, twice play'd, our nation gull ?
 It looks as if the devil were grown dull ;
 Or serv'd us up, in scorn, his broken meat,
 And thought we were not worth a better cheat.
 The fulsome Cov'nant, one would think in reason,
 Had giv'n us all our bellies-full of treason :

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And yet, the name but chang'd, our nasty nation
Chews it's own excrement, th' Association.
'Tis true, we have not learn'd their pois'ning way,
For that's a mode but newly come in play;
Besides your drug's uncertain to prevail;
But your true protestant can never fail
With that compendious instrument, a flail.
Go on; and bite, e'en though the hook lies bare;
Twice in one age expel the lawful heir:
Once more decide religion by the sword;
And purchase for us a new tyrant lord.
Pray for your King; but yet your purses spare;
Make him not two-pence richer by your prayer.
To shew you love him much, chastise him more;
And make him very great, and very poor.
Push him to wars, but still no pence advance;
Let him lose England, to recover France.
Cry freedom up with popular noisy votes:
And get enough to cut each others throats.
Lop all the rights that fence your monarch's throne;
For fear of too much pow'r, pray leave him none.
A noise was made of arbitrary sway;
But in revenge, you Whigs have found a way
An arbitrary duty now to pay.
Let his own servants turn, to save their stake;
Glean from his plenty, and his wants forsake.
But let some Judas near his person stay,
To swallow the last sop, and then betray.
Make London independant of the crown:
A realm apart; the kingdom of the town.
Let ignoramus juries find no traytors,
And ignoramus poets scribble satires.
And, that your meaning none may fail to scan,
Do, what in coffee-houses you began,
Pull down the master, and set up the man.

EPILOGUE

To the DUKE of GUISE.

MUCH time and trouble this poor play has cost;
And, faith, I doubted once the cause was lost.

Yet no one man was meant; nor great, nor small;

Our poets, like frank gamesters, threw at all.

They took no single aim:——

But, like bold boys, true to their prince and hearty,

Huzza'd, and fir'd broadsides at the whole party.

Duels are crimes; but when the cause is right,

In battle, every man is bound to fight.

For what should hinder me to sell my skin

Dear as I could, if once my hand were in?

Se defendendo never was a sin.

'Tis a fine world, my masters! Right or wrong,

The Whigs must talk, and Tories hold their tongue.

They must do all they can——

But We, forsooth, must bear a Christian Mind;

And fight, like boys, with one hand ty'd behind;

Nay, and when one boy's down, 'twere wond'rous wise,

To cry, box fair, and give him time to rise.

When fortune favours, none but fools will dally:

Would any of your sparks, if *Nan* or *Mally*

Tipt you th' inviting wink, stand shall I, shall I?

A Trimmer cry'd (that heard me tell this story),

Fie, Mistress Cooke! Faith you're too rank a Tory!

Wish not Whigs hang'd, but pity their hard cases;

You women love to see men make wry faces.

Pray, sir, says I, don't think me such a Jew;

I say no more, but give the Dev'l his due.

Lenitives, says he, suit best with our condition.

Jack Ketch, says I, 's an excellent phyfician.

I love no blood——Nor I, Sir, as I breath;

But hanging is a fine dry kind of death.

We Trimmers are for holding all things even:

Yes——juft like him that hung 'twixt Hell and Heaven.

Have we not had mens lives enough already?

Yes fure:——but you're for holding all things fteady:

Now, fince the weight hangs all on one fide, brother,

You Trimmers fhould, to poize it, hang on t'other.

Damn'd neuters, in their middle way of fteering,

Are neither fift, nor fleft, nor good red-herring:

Not Whigs, nor Tories they; nor this, nor that;

Not birds, nor beafts; but juft a kind of bat:

A twilight animal; true to neither caufe;

With Tory wings, but Whiggift teeth and claws.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* Opera of ALBION and ALBANIUS.

FULL twenty years and more our lab'ring ftage
Has loft on this incorrigible age:

Our poets, the John Ketches of the nation,

Have feem'd to lafh you, e'en to excoriation:

But ftill no fign remains; which plainly notes,

You bore like heroes, or you brib'd like Oates.

What can we do, when mimicking a fop,

Like beating nut-trees, makes a larger crop?

Faith we'll e'en fpare our pains; and to content you,

Will fairly leave you what your Maker meant you.

Satyr was once your phyfick, wit your food;

One nourift'd not, and t'other drew no blood.

We now prescribe, like doctors in despair,
 The diet your weak appetites can bear.
 Since hearty beef and mutton will not do,
 Here's julep dance, ptisan of song and show:
 Give you strong sense, the liquor is too heady;
 Your' re come to farce, that Afs's Milk, already.
 Some hopeful youths there are, of callow wit,
 Who one day may be men, if heav'n think fit;
 Sound may serve such, e'er they to sense are grown;
 Like leading-strings, 'till they can walk alone.
 But yet to keep our friend in count'nance, know,
 The wise Italians first invented show;
 Thence, into France the noble pageant past;
 'Tis England's credit to be cozen'd last.
 Freedom and zeal have chous'd you o'er and o'er;
 Pray give us leave to bubble you once more;
 You never were so cheaply fool'd before;
 We bring you change to humour your disease;
 Change for the worse has ever us'd to please:
 Then 'tis the mode of France; without whose rules,
 None must presume to set up here for fools:
 In France the oldest man is always young,
 Sees Operas daily, learns the tunes so long,
 Till foot, hand, head, keep time with ev'ry song.
 Each sings his part, echoing from pit and box,
 With his hoarse voice, half harmony, half pox.
Le plus grand roi du monde, is always ringing;
 They show themselves good subjects by their singing.
 On that condition set up every throat;
 You Whigs may sing, for you have chang'd your note.
 Cits and Citessees, raise a joyful strain,
 'Tis a good omen to begin a reign:
 Voices may help your charter to restoring,
 And get by singing, what you lost by roaring.

EPILOGUE

To the Opera of ALBION and ALBANIUS.

AFTER our Æsop's Fable shewn to-day,
 I come to give the moral of the play.
 Feign'd Zeal, you saw, set out the speedier pace;
 But, the last heat, Plain-Dealing won the race:
 Plain-Dealing for a jewel has been known;
 But ne'er till now the jewel of a crown.
 When heaven made man, to shew the work divine,
 Truth was his image, stamp'd upon the coin.
 And, when a King is to a God refin'd,
 On all he says and does, he stamps his mind:
 This proves a soul without alloy, and pure;
 Kings, like their gold, should ev'ry touch endure.
 To dare in fields is valour; but how few
 Dare be so thoroughly valiant to be true?
 The name of great, let other kings affect:
 He's great indeed, the Prince that is direct.
 His subjects know him now, and trust him more,
 Than all their kings, and all their laws before.
 What safety could their publick acts afford?
 Those he can break; but cannot break his word.
 So great a trust to Him alone was due;
 Well have they trusted whom so well they knew.
 The faint, who walk'd on waves, securely trod,
 While he believ'd the beckning of his God;
 But, when his faith no longer bore him out,
 Began to sink, as he began to doubt.
 Let us our native character maintain,
 'Tis of our growth to be sincerely plain.

T' excell in truth, we loyally may strive;
 Set privilege against prerogative:
 He plights his faith, and We believe him just;
 His honour is to promise, Ours to trust.
 Thus Britain's basis on a word is laid,
 As by a word the world itself was made.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* DON SEBASTIAN King of PORTUGAL.

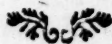
Spoken by a Woman.

THE judge remov'd, tho' he's no more my lord,
 May plead at bar, or at the council-board:
 So may cast poets write; there's no pretension,
 To argue loss of wit from loss of pension.
 Your looks are chearful; and in all this place
 I see not one, that wears a damning face.
 The British nation is too brave to show,
 Ignoble vengeance on a vanquish'd foe;
 At least be civil to the wretch imploring;
 And lay your paws upon him, without roaring:
 Suppose our poet was your foe before,
 Yet now, the bus'ness of the field is o'er;
 'Tis time to let your civil wars alone,
 When troops are into winter-quarters gone.
 Jove was alike to Latian and to Phrygian;
 And you well know a play's of no religion.
 Take good advice, and please yourselves this day;
 No matter from what hands you have the play.
 Among good fellows ev'ry health will pass,
 That serves to carry round another glass:

When, with full bowls of Burgundy you dine,
Though at the mighty monarch you repine,
You grant him still Most Christian, in his wine. }

Thus far the poet; but his brains grow addle;
And all the rest is purely from this noddle.
You've seen young ladies at the senate door,
Prefer petitions, and your grace implore;
However grave the legislators were,
Their cause went ne'er the worse for being fair.
Reasons as weak as theirs perhaps I bring;
But I could bribe you with as good a thing.
I heard him make advances of good nature;
That he, for once, would sheath his cutting satire:
Sign but his peace, he vows he'll ne'er again
The sacred names of fops and beaux profane.
Strike up the bargain quickly; for I swear,
As times go now, he offers very fair.
Be not too hard on him, with statutes neither;
Be kind; and do not set your teeth together, }

To stretch the laws, as cobblers do their leather.
Horses, by papists are not to be ridden;
But sure the Muse's Horse was ne'er forbidden.
For in no rate-book it was ever found
That Pegasus was valu'd at five pound:
Fine him to daily drudging and inditing;
And let him pay his taxes out in writing.



EPILOGUE

TO DON SEBASTIAN King of PORTUGAL.

Spoken betwixt Antonio and Morayma.

MOR. **I** Quak'd at heart for fear the royal fashion
Should have seduc'd us two to separation :

To be drawn in, against our own desire,
Poor I to be a nun, poor you a friar.

ANT. I trembled when the old man's hand was in,
He would have prov'd we were too near of kin :
Discovering old intrigues of love, like t' other,
Betwixt my father and thy sinful mother;
To make us sister Turk and Christian brother. }

MOR. Excuse me there; that league should have
been rather

Betwixt your mother and my Musti-father;
'Tis for my own and my relations credit
Your friends should bear the bastard, mine should get it.

ANT. Suppose us two Almeyda and Sebastian
With incest prov'd upon us: — — }

MOR. — — — Without question,
Their conscience was two queazy of digestion.

ANT. Thou would'st have kept the council of
thy brother,
And sinn'd till we repented of each other.

MOR. Beast as you are, on nature's laws to trample!
'Twere fitter that we follow'd their example:
And since all marriage in repentance ends,
'Tis good for us to part while we are friends:
To save a maid's remorses and confusions,
E'en leave me now, before we try conclusions.

ANT. To copy their example, first make certain
Of one good hour like theirs before our parting;
Make a debauch o'er-night of love and madness,
And marry when we wake in sober sadness.

MOR. I'll follow no new sects of your inventing,
One night might cost me nine long months repenting:
First wed, and if you find that life a fetter,
Die when you please, the sooner, sir, the better.
My wealth would get me love e'er I could ask it:
Oh there's a strange temptation in the casket!
All these young sharpers would my grace importune,
And make me thund'ring vows of lives and fortune.

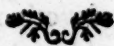
P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* AMPHITRYON, or the TWO SOSIAS.

THE lab'ring bee, when his sharp sting is gone,
Forgets his golden work, and turns a drone:
Such is a Satyre, when you take away
That rage, in which his noble vigour lay.
What gain you, by not suffering him to teaze ye?
He neither can offend you now, nor please ye.
'The honey-bag, and venom, lay so near,
That both, together, you resolv'd to tear;
And lost your pleasure, to secure your fear.
How can he shew his manhood, if you bind him,
To box, like boys, with one hand ty'd behind him?
This is plain leveling of wit; in which
The poor has all th' advantage, not the rich.
The blockhead stands excus'd for wanting sense;
And wits turn blockheads in their own defence.
Yet, though the stage's traffick is undone,
Still Julian's interloping trade goes on:

Though satire on the theatre you smother,
 Yet in lampoons you libel one another.
 The first produces still a second jig;
 You whip them out, like school-boys, till they gig:
 And, with the same success, we readers guess;
 For ev'ry one still dwindles to a less.
 And much good malice is so meanly drest,
 That we could laugh, but cannot find the jest.
 If no advice your rhiming rage can stay,
 Let not the ladies suffer in the fray.
 Their tender sex is privileg'd from war;
 'Tis not like knights, to draw upon the fair.
 What fame expect you from so mean a prize?
 We wear no murd'ring weapons, but our eyes.
 Our sex, you know, was after yours design'd;
 The last perfection of the Maker's mind:
 Heav'n drew out all the gold for us, and left your
 dross behind.

Beauty, for valour's best reward, he chose;
 Peace, after war; and after toil, repose.
 Hence ye profane, excluded from our fights;
 And charm'd by day, with honour's vain delights,
 Go make your best of solitary nights.
 Recant betimes, 'tis prudence to submit:
 Our sex is still your overmatch in wit:
 We never fail, with new successful arts,
 To make fine fools of you, and all your parts.



EPILOGUE

TO AMPHITRYON, or the Two SOSIAS.

Spoken by Phædra.

I'M thinking, (and it almost makes me mad,)
 How sweet a time those heathen ladies had.
 Idolatry was e'en their Gods own trade;
 They worship'd the fine creatures they had made.
 Cupid was chief of all the deities;
 And love was all the fashion in the skies.
 When the sweet nymph held up the lily hand,
 Jove was her humble servant at command.
 The treasury of heav'n was ne'er so bare,
 But still there was a pension for the fair:
 In all his reign adultery was no sin;
 For Jove the good example did begin.
 Mark, too, when he usurp'd the Husband's name,
 How civilly he sav'd the lady's fame.
 The secret joys of love He wisely hid;
 But you, Sirs, boast of more than e'er you did.
 You tease your cuckolds; to their face torment them;
 But Jove gave his new honours to content them.
 And, in the kind remembrance of the fair,
 On each exalted son bestow'd a star.
 For those good deeds, as by the date appears,
 His Godship flourish'd full two thousand years.
 At last, when he and all his priests grew old,
 The ladies grew in their devotion cold;
 And that false worship would no longer hold.
 Severity of life did next begin;
 (And always does, when we no more can fin.)

That doctrine too so hard in practice lies,
 That the next age may see another rise.
 Then Pagan Gods may once again succeed;
 And Jove, or Mars, be ready at our need,
 To get young godlings; and so mend our breed.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* CLEOMENES, the Spartan Hero.

I Think, or hope at least, the coast is clear,
 That none but men of wit and sense are here:
 That our bear-garden friends are all away,
 Who bounce with hands and feet, and cry play, play.
 Who to save coach-hire, trudge along the street,
 Then print our matted seats with dirty feet;
 Who, while we speak, make love to orange-wenches,
 And between acts stand strutting on the benches:
 Where got a cock-horse, making vile grimaces,
 They to the boxes shew their booby faces.
 A merry-andrew such a mob will serve,
 And treat them with such wit as they deserve:
 Let them go people Ireland, where there's need
 Of such new planters to repair the breed;
 Or to Virginia, or Jamaica steer,
 But have a care of some French privateer;
 For if they should become the prize of battle,
 They'll take them black and white for Irish cattle.
 Arise, True Judges, in your own defence,
 Control those foplings, and declare for sense:
 For should the fools prevail, they stop not there,
 But make their next descent upon the fair.
 Then rise, ye Fair! for it concerns you most,
 That fools no longer should your favours boast;

'Tis time you should renounce them, for we find
 They plead a senseless claim to womankind:
 Such squires are only fit for country towns,
 To stink of ale, and dust a stand with clowns:
 Who, to be chosen for the land's protectors,
 Tope and get drunk before their wise electors.
 Let not farce lovers your weak choice upbraid,
 But turn them over to the chamber-maid.
 Or if they come to see our tragick scenes,
 Instruct them what a Spartan Hero means:
 Teach them how manly passions ought to move,
 For such as cannot think can never love:
 And since they needs will judge the poet's art,
 Point them with fescues to each shining part.
 Our author hopes in you, but still in pain,
 He fears your charms will be employ'd in vain;
 You can make fools of wits, we find each hour,
 But to make wits of fools, is past your power.

E P I L O G U E

To CLEOMENES, the Spartan Hero.

THIS day, the poet, bloodily inclin'd,
 Has made me die full fore against my mind!
 Some of you naughty men, I fear, will cry,
 Poor rogue! would I might teach thee how to die!
 Thanks for your love; but I sincerely say,
 I never meant to die your wicked way.
 Well, since it is decreed all flesh must go,
 (And I am flesh, at least for ought you know,)
 I first declare, I die with pious mind,
 In perfect charity with all mankind.
 Next for my will——I have in my dispose,
 Some certain moveables would please you beaux;

As, first, my Youth; for as I have been told,
 Some of you modish sparks, are dev'lish old.
 My Chastity I need not leave among ye:
 For to suspect old fops, were much to wrong ye.
 You swear you're sinners; but for all your haste,
 Your Misses shake their heads, and find you chaste.
 I give my Courage to those bold commanders,
 That stay with us, and dare not go for Flanders.
 I leave my Truth, (to make his plot more clear,)
 To Mr. Fuller, when he next shall swear.
 I give my Judgment, craving all your mercies,
 To those that leave good plays, for damn'd dull farces.
 My small Devotion let the gallants share
 That come to ogle us at evening pray'r.
 I give my Person ——— let me well consider,
 Faith e'en to him that is the fairest bidder.
 To some rich hunks, if any be so bold
 To say those dreadful words, — to Have and Hold.
 But stay ——— to give, and be bequeathing still,
 When I'm so poor, is just like Wickham's will:
 Like that notorious cheat, vast sums I give,
 Only that you may keep me while I live.
 Buy a good bargain, gallants, while you may,
 I'll cost you but your half-a-crown a day.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* Opera of King ARTHUR, or the
 British Worthy.

SURE there's a dearth of wit in this dull town,
 When silly plays so favourably go down:
 As when clipp'd money passes, 'tis a sign
 A nation is not over-stock'd with coin.

Happy is he, who, in his own defence,
Can write just level to your humble sense;
Who higher than your pitch can never go;
And doubtless, he must creep, who writes below.
So I have seen in hall of knight, or lord,
A weak arm throw on a long shovel-board,
He barely lays his piece, bar rubs and knocks,
Secur'd by weakness not to reach the box.
A feeble poet will his bus'ness do;
Who straining all he can, comes up to you:
For if you like yourselves, you like him too. }
An ape his own dear image will embrace;
An ugly beau adores a hatchet face:
So some of you, on pure instinct of nature,
Are led, by kind, t' admire your fellow creature.
In fear of which, our house has sent this day,
T'insure our new-built vessel call'd a play.
No sooner nam'd than one cries out, these stagers
Come in good time, to make more work for wagers.
The town divides, if it will take or no,
The courtiers bet, the cits, the merchants too: }
A sign they have but little else to do.
Bets, at the first, were fool-traps; where the wise,
Like spiders, lay in ambush for the flies:
But now they're grown a common trade for all,
And actions, by the news-book, rise and fall. }
Wits, cheats, and fops, are free of wager-hall.
One policy as far as Lyons carries;
Another, nearer home sets up for Paris.
Our bets, at last, would e'en to Rome extend,
But that the pope has prov'd our trusty friend.
Indeed, it were a bargain, worth our money,
Could we ensure another Ottoboni.
Among the rest, there are a sharpening set,
That pray for us, and yet against us bet:

Sure heav'n itself, is at a loss to know,
 If these would have their pray'rs be heard or no:
 For in great stakes we piously suppose,
 Men pray but very faintly they may lose.
 Leave off these wagers; for in conscience speaking,
 The city needs not your new tricks for breaking:
 And if you gallants lose, to all appearing
 You'll want an equipage for volunteering;
 While thus, no spark of honour left within ye,
 When you should draw the sword, you draw the guinea.

EPILOGUE

To the Opera of King ARTHUR, or the British Worthy.

I'VE had to-day a dozen billet-doux,
 From fops, and wits, and cits, and Bow-Street beaux;
 Some from Whitehall, but from the Temple more;
 A Covent-Garden porter brought me four.
 I have not yet read all: but, without feigning,
 We maids can make shrewd guesses at your meaning.
 What if, to shew your styles, I read them here?
 Methinks I here one cry, 'Oh lord, forbear:
 'No, madam, no; by heav'n that's too severe.'
 Well then be safe——
 But swear henceforwards to renounce all writing,
 And take this solemn oath of my inditing,
 'As you love ease, and hate campaigns and fighting.'
 Yet, faith, 'tis just to make some few examples:
 What if I shew you one or two for samples?
 Here's one desires my ladyship to meet [*Pulls one out.*
 At the kind couch above, in Bridges-Street.
 Oh sharpening knave! that would have, you know what,
 For a poor sneaking treat of chocolate.

Now, in the name of luck, I'll break this open,
 Because I dreamt last night I had a token; [*Pulls out another.*
 The superscription is exceeding pretty,
 ' To the desire of all the town and city.'

Now, gallants, you must know, this precious fop,
 Is foreman of a haberdasher's shop:

One who devoutly cheats; demure in carriage;
 And courts me to the holy bands of marriage.
 But with a civil inuendo too,

My overplus of love shall be for you.

' Madam, I swear your looks are so divine, [*reads.*

' When I set up, your face shall be my sign:

' Though times are hard; to shew how I adore you,

' Here's my whole heart, and half a guinea for you.

' But have a care of beaux; they're false, my honey;

' And, which is worse, have not one rag of money.'

See how maliciously the rogue would wrong ye;

But I know better things of some among ye.

My wisest way will be to keep the stage,

And trust to the good nature of the age;

And he that likes the musick and the play,

Shall be my favourite gallant to-day.

P R O L O G U E

To *Dryden's* LOVE TRIUMPHANT, or, Nature
 will prevail.

AS, when some treasurer lays down the stick
 Warrants are sign'd for ready money thick;
 And many desperate debentures paid,
 Which never had been, had his lordship staid;
 So now, this poet, who forsakes the stage,
 Intends to gratify the present age.

One warrant shall be sign'd for every man:
 All shall be wits that will; and beaux that can:
 Provided still, this warrant be not shown,
 And you be wits but to yourselves alone.
 Provided too; you rail at one another:
 For there's no one wit, will allow a brother.
 Provided also; that you spare this story,
 Damn all the plays that e'er shall come before ye.
 If one by chance prove good in half a score,
 Let that one pay for all; and damn it more.
 For if a good one scape among the crew,
 And you continue judging as you do, }
 Every bad play will hope for damning too.
 You might damn this, if it were worth your pains, }
 Here's nothing you will like; no fustian scenes,
 And nothing too of — you know what he means. }
 No double entendres, which you sparks allow;
 To make the ladies look they know not how;
 Simply as 'twere; and knowing both together,
 Seeming to fan their faces in cold weather.
 But here's a story which no books relate;
 Coin'd from our own old poet's addle pate.
 The fable has a moral too, if sought: }
 But let that go; for, upon second thought,
 He fears but few come hither to be taught.
 Yet if you will be profited you may;
 And he would bribe you too, to like his play.
 He dies, at least to us, and to the stage,
 And what he has, he leaves this noble age.
 He leaves you first, all plays of his inditing,
 The whole estate, which he has got by writing.
 The beaux may think this nothing but vain praise,
 They'll find it something; the testator says: }
 For half their love, is made from scraps of plays.

To his worst foes he leaves his Honesty;
 That they may thrive upon't as much as he.
 He leaves his Manners to the roaring boys,
 Who come in drunk, and fill the house with noise.
 He leaves to the dire criticks of his wit,
 His Silence, and Contempt of all they writ.
 To Shakespear's critick, he bequeaths the curse,
 To find his faults; and yet himself make worse.
 A precious reader in poetick schools,
 Who, by his own examples, damns his rules.
 Last for the fair, he wishes you may be,
 From your dull criticks, the Lampooners, free.
 Though he pretends no legacy to leave you,
 An old man may at least good wishes give you.
 Your beauty names the play; and may it prove
 To each an omen of Triumphant Love!

E P I L O G U E.

To LOVE TRIUMPHANT, or, Nature will prevail.

NOW in good manners, nothing should be said
 Against this play, because the poet's dead.
 The Prologue told us of a moral here:
 Would I could find it; but the devil knows where.
 If in my part it lies, I fear he means
 To warn us of the sparks behind our scenes:
 For if you'll take it on Dalinda's word,
 'Tis a hard chapter to refuse a lord.
 The poet might pretend this moral too,
 That when a wit and fool together woo;
 The damsel (not to break an antient rule,)
 Should leave the wit, and take the wealthy fool.

This he might mean, but there's a truth behind,
 And since it touches none of all our kind,
 But masks and misses; faith, I'll speak my mind.
 What, if he taught our sex more cautious carriage;
 And not to be too coming before marriage;
 For fear of my misfortune in the play,
 A kid brought home upon the wedding day:
 I fear there are few Sanchos in the pit,
 So good as to forgive, and to forget;
 That will, like him, restore us into favour,
 And take us after on our good behaviour.
 Few, when they find the money-bag is rent,
 Will take it for good payment on content.
 But in the telling, there the difference is,
 Sometimes they find it more than they could wish.
 Therefore be warn'd, you Misses and you Masks,
 Look to your hits, nor give the first that asks.
 Tears, sighs, and oaths, no truth of passion prove,
 True settlement alone declares true love.
 For him that weds a pufs, who kept her first,
 I say but little, but I doubt the worst:
 The wife that was a cat may mind her house,
 And prove an honest, and a careful spouse;
 But faith I would not trust her with a mouse.

P R O L O G U E

Spoken before the University of OXFORD, in 1674.

Written by DRYDEN.

POETS, your subjects, have their parts assign'd
 T' unbend, and to divert their sov'reign's mind:
 When, tir'd with following nature, you think fit
 To seek repose in the cool shades of wit,

And, from the sweet retreat, with joy survey
What rests, and what is conquer'd, of the way.
Here, free yourselves from envy, care, and strife,
You view the various turns of human life:
Safe in our scene, through dangerous courts you go,
And, undebauch'd, the vice of cities know.
Your theories are here to practice brought,
As in mechanick operations wrought;
And man, the little world, before you set,
As once the sphere of chrystal shew'd the great.
Blest sure are you above all mortal kind,
If to your fortunes you can suit your mind:
Content to see, and shun, those ills we show,
And crimes on theatres alone to know.
With joy we bring what our dead authors writ,
And beg from you the value of their wit:
That Shakespear's, Fletcher's, and great Jonson's claim
May be renew'd from those who gave them fame.
None of our living poets dare appear;
For Muses so severe are worship'd here,
That conscious of their faults, they shun the eye,
And, as profane, from sacred places fly,
Rather than see th' offended God, and die. }
We bring no imperfections but our own;
Such faults as made are by the makers shown:
And you have been so kind, that we may boast,
The greatest judges still can pardon most.
Poets must stoop when they would please our pit,
Debas'd e'en to the level of their wit;
Disdaining that, which yet they know will take,
Hating themselves what their applause must make:
But when to praise from you they would aspire,
Though they like eagles mount, your Jove is higher
So far your knowledge all their pow'r transcends,
As what *should* be beyond what *is* extends.

P R O L O G U E

Spoken at the opening of the New House, in March, 1674.

Written by DRYDEN.

A Plain-built House, after so long a stay,
 Will send you half unsatisfy'd away;
 When, fall'n from your expected pomp, you find
 A bare convenience only is design'd.
 You, who each day can theatres behold,
 Like Nero's palace, shining all with gold,
 Our mean ungilded stage will scorn, we fear,
 And for the homely room, disdain the cheer.
 Yet now cheap druggets to a mode are grown,
 And a plain suit (since we can make but one)
 Is better than to be by tarnish'd gawdry known.
 They, who are by your favours wealthy made,
 With mighty fums may carry on the trade:
 We, broken bankers, half destroy'd by fire,
 With our small stock to humble roofs retire:
 Pity our loss, while you their pomp admire.
 For fame and honour we no longer strive,
 We yield in both, and only beg to live:
 Unable to support their vast expence,
 Who build and treat with such magnificence;
 That, like th' ambitious monarchs of the age,
 They give the law to our provincial stage.
 Great neighbours enviously promote excess,
 While they impose their splendor on the less.
 But only fools, and they of vast estate,
 Th' extremity of modes will imitate,
 The dangling knee-fringe, and the bib-cravat.

Yet if some pride with want may be allow'd,
 We in our plainness may be justly proud:
 Our Royal Master will'd it should be so;
 Whate'er he's pleas'd to own, can need no show:
 That sacred name gives ornament and grace,
 And, like his stamp, makes basest metals pass.
 'Twere folly now a stately pile to raise,
 To build a play-house while you throw down plays.
 While scenes, machines, and empty Operas reign,
 And for the pencil you the pen disdain:
 While troops of famish'd Frenchmen hither drive,
 And laugh at those upon whose alms they live:
 Old English authors vanish, and give place
 To these new conqu'rors of the Norman race.
 More tamely than your fathers you submit;
 You're now grown vassals to them in your wit.
 Mark, when they play, how our fine fops advance
 The mighty merits of their men of France,
 Keep time, cry *bon*, and humour the cadence.
 Well, please yourselves; but sure 'tis understood,
 That French machines have ne'er done English good.
 I would not prophesy our house's fate;
 But while vain shews and scenes you over-rate,
 'Tis to be fear'd — — —
 That as a fire the former house o'erthrew,
 Machines and Tempests will destroy the New.



EPILOGUE

On the same Occasion.

THOUGH what our Prologue said was sadly true,

Yet, gentlemen, our homely House is new,
A charm that seldom fails with, wicked you.

A country lip may have the velvet touch;

Though she's no lady, you may think her such;

A strong imagination may do much.

But you, loud sirs, who through your curls look big,

Criticks in plume and white vallancy wig,

Who lolling on our foremost benches sit,

And still charge first (the true forlorn of wit;)

Whose favours, like the sun, warm where you roll,

Yet you, like him, have neither heat nor soul;

So may your hats your foretops never press,

Untouch'd your ribbons, sacred be your dress;

So may you slowly to old age advance,

And have th' excuse of youth for ignorance:

So may Fop-corner full of noise remain,

And drive far off the dull attentive train;

So may your midnight scow'ring happy prove,

And morning batt'ries force your way to love;

So may not France your warlike hands recall,

But leave you by each other's swords to fall:

As you come here to ruffle vizard punk,

When sober, rail, and roar when you are drunk.

But to the wits we can some merit plead,

And urge what by themselves has oft been said:

Our House relieves the ladies from the frights

Of ill-pav'd streets, and long dark winter nights:

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The Flanders horses from a cold bleak road,
 Where Bears in Furs dare scarcely look abroad;
 The audience from worn plays and fustian stuff
 Of rhyme, more nauseous than three boys in buff.
 Though in their House the Poets heads appear,
 We hope we may presume their wits are here.
 'The best which they reserv'd they now will play;
 For, like kind cuckolds, tho' w' have not the way
 To please, we'll find you abler men who may.
 If they shou'd fail, for last recruits we breed
 A troop of frisking *Monsieurs* to succeed:
 You know the French sure cards at time of need.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

To Dr. *Davenant's* CIRCE.

WERE you but half so wise as you're severe,
 Our youthful poet shou'd not need to fear:
 To his green years your censures you would suit,
 Not blast the blossom, but expect the fruit.
 The sex, that best does pleasure understand,
 Will always chuse to err on t'other hand.
 They check not him that's aukward in delight,
 But clap the young rogue's cheek, and set him right.
 Thus hearten'd well, and flesh'd upon his prey,
 The youth may prove a man another day.
 Your Ben and Fletcher, in their first young flight,
 Did no *Volpone*, nor no *Arbaces* write;
 But hopp'd about, and short excursions made
 From bough to bough, as if they were afraid,
 And each was guilty of some *slighted maid*.
 Shakespeare's own muse her *Pericles* first bore;
 The prince of Tyre was elder than the Moor:

'Tis miracle to see a first good play;
 All hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day.
 A slender poet must have time to grow,
 And spread and burnish as his brothers do.
 Who still looks lean, sure with some pox is curst:
 But no man can be Falstaff-fat at first.
 Then damn not, but indulge his rude essays,
 Encourage him, and bloat him up with praise,
 That he may get more bulk before he dies:
 He's not yet fed enough for sacrifice.
 Perhaps, if now your grace you will not grudge,
 He may grow up to write, and you to judge.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

Intended to have been spoken by the Lady *Henr. Mar.*
Wentworth, when CALISTO* was acted at court.

AS Jupiter I made my court in vain;
 I'll now assume my native shape again.
 I'm weary to be so unkindly us'd,
 And would not be a god to be refus'd.
 State grows uneasy when it hinders love;
 A glorious burden, which the wise remove.
 Now as a nymph I need not sue, nor try
 The force of any light'ning but the eye.
 Beauty and youth more than a god command;
 No Jove could e'er the force of these withstand.
 'Tis here that sov'reign power admits dispute;
 Beauty sometimes is justly absolute.
 Our sullen Catos, whatsoe'er they say,
 Even while they frown and dictate laws, obey.

* A Masque, By Mr. *Crown*. 1675.

You, mighty fir, our bonds more easy make,
 And gracefully, what all must suffer, take:
 Above those forms the grave affect to wear;
 For 'tis not to be wise to be severe.
 True wisdom may some gallantry admit,
 And soften business with the charms of wit.
 These peaceful triumphs with your cares you bought,
 And from the midst of fighting nations brought.
 You only hear it thunder from afar,
 And sit in peace the arbiter of war:
 Peace, the loath'd manna, which hot brains despise,
 You knew its worth, and made it early prize:
 And in its happy leisure sit and see
 The promises of more felicity:
 Two glorious nymphs of your own godlike line,
 Whose morning rays like noontide strike and shine;
 Whom you to suppliant monarchs shall dispose,
 To bind your friends, and to disarm your foes.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Sir G. *Etherege's* MAN of MODE, 1676.

MOST modern wits such monstrous fools have shown,
 They seem not of heav'n's making, but their own,
 Those nauseous Harlequins in Farce may pass;
 But there goes more to a substantial ass:
 Something of man must be expos'd to view,
 That, gallants, they may more resemble you.
 Sir Fopling is a fool so nicely writ,
 The ladies would mistake him for a wit;
 And, when he sings, talks loud, and cocks, wou'd cry,
 I vow, methinks, he's pretty company;

So brisk, so gay, so travell'd, so refin'd,
 As he took pains to graff upon his kind.
 True fops help nature's work, and go to school,
 To file and finish God Almighty's fool.
 Yet none Sir Fopling him, or him can call;
 He's Knight o' th' Shire, and represents ye all.
 From each he meets he culls whate'er he can;
Legion's his name, a people in a man.
 His bulky folly gathers as it goes,
 And, rolling o'er you, like a snow-Ball grows.
 His various modes from various fathers follow;
 One taught the tofs, and one the new French wallow.
 His sword-knot this, his cravat that design'd;
 And this, the yard-long snake he twirls behind.
 From one the sacred perriwig he gain'd,
 Which wind ne'er blew, nor touch of hat prophan'd.
 Another's diving bow he did adore,
 Which with a shog casts all the hair before,
 'Till he with full *Decorum* brings it back,
 And rises with a water-spaniel shake.
 As for his songs (the ladies dear delight)
 These sure he took from most of you who write.
 Yet ev'ry man is safe from what he fear'd;
 For no one fool is hunted from the herd.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. N. Lee's MITHRIDATES King of PONTUS. 1678.

YOU'VE seen a pair of faithful Lovers die:
 And much you care; for most of you will cry,
 'Twas a just judgment on their constancy. }
 For, heav'n be thank'd, we live in such an age,
 When no man dies for Love, but on the Stage:

And e'en those martyrs are but rare in plays;
 Accursed sign how much true faith decays.
 Love is no more a violent desire;
 'Tis a meer metaphor, a painted fire.
 In all our sex, the name examin'd well,
 'Tis pride to gain, and vanity to tell.
 In woman, 'tis of subtle int'rest made:
 Curse on the punk that made it first a trade!
 She first did wit's prerogative remove,
 And made a fool presume to prate of love.
 Let honour and preferment go for gold;
 But glorious beauty is not to be sold:
 Or, if it be, 'tis at a rate so high,
 That nothing but adoring it should buy.
 Yet the rich cullies may their boasting spare;
 They purchase but sophisticated ware.
 'Tis prodigality that buys deceit,
 Where both the giver and the taker cheat.
 Men but refine on the old half-crown way:
 And women fight, like Swissers, for their pay.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

To Mr. N. Lee's CÆSAR BORGIA. 1680.

TH' unhappy man who once has trail'd a pen,
 Lives not to please himself, but other men;
 Is always drudging, wastes his life and blood,
 Yet only eats and drinks what you think good.
 What praise so'er the poetry deserve,
 Yet ev'ry fool can bid the poet starve.
 That fumbling letcher to revenge is bent,
 Because he thinks himself or whore is meant:

Name but a Cuckold, all the City swarms;
 From Leadenhall to Ludgate is in Arms:
 Were there no fear of Antichrist or France,
 In the blest time poor poets live by chance.
 Either you come not here, or, as you grace
 Some old acquaintance, drop into the place,
 Careless and qualmish with a yawning face:
 You sleep o'er wit, and by my troth you may;
 Most of your talents lie another way.
 You love to hear of some prodigious tale,
 The bell that toll'd alone, or Irish Whale.
 News is your food, and you enough provide,
 Both for your selves, and all the world beside.
 One Theatre there is of vast resort,
 Which whilom of *Requests* was called *The Court*;
 But now the great *Exchange of News* 'tis hight,
 And full of hum and buz from noon till night.
 Up stairs and down you run, as for a race,
 And each man wears three nations in his face.
 So big you look, though claret you retrench,
 That, arm'd with bottled ale, you huff the French.
 But all your entertainment still is fed
 By villains in your own dull island bred.
 Wou'd you return to us, we dare engage
 To shew you better rogues upon the stage.
 You know no poison but plain ratbane here;
 Death's more refin'd, and better bred elsewhere.
 They have a civil way in Italy,
 By smelling a perfume to make you die;
 A Trick would make you lay your snuff-box by.
 Murder's a trade, so known and practis'd there,
 That 'tis infallible as is the chair.
 But, mark their feast, you shall behold such pranks;
 The Pope says grace, but 'tis the Dev'l gives thanks.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN.

To SOPHONISBA, performed at *Oxford*, 1680.

THESPIS, the first professor of our art,
 At country wakes, sung ballads from a cart.
 To prove this true, if Latin be no trespass,
Dicitur et Plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis.
 But Æschylus, says Horace in some page,
 Was the first mountebank that trod the stage:
 Yet Athens never knew your learned sport
 Of tossing poets in a Tennis-court.
 But 'tis the talent of our English Nation,
 Still to be plotting some new reformation:
 And few years hence, if anarchy goes on,
 Jack Presbyter shall here erect his throne,
 Knock out a tub with preaching once a day,
 And ev'ry pray'r be longer than a play.
 Then all your heathen wits shall go to pot,
 For disbelieving of a Popish-plot;
 Your poets shall be us'd like infidels,
 And worst the author of the Oxford Belles:
 Nor should we 'scape the sentence, to depart,
 E'en in our first original, a cart.
 No zealous brother there would want a stone,
 To maul us Cardinals, and pelt Pope Joan:
 Religion, learning, wit, would be suppress'd,
 Rags of the whore, and trappings of the beast:
 Scot, Suares, Tom of Aquin must go down,
 As chief supporters of the triple crown;
 And Aristotle's for destruction ripe;
 Some say, he call'd the soul an organ-pipe,
 Which, by some little help of derivation,
 Shall then be prov'd a pipe of inspiration.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the University of OXFORD, 1681.

THE fam'd *Italian* muse, whose rhymes advance
 Orlando, and the Paladins of France,
 Records, that, when our wit and sense is flown,
 'Tis lodg'd within the circle of the moon,
 In earthen jars, which one, who thither soar'd,
 Set to his nose, snuff'd up, and was restor'd.
 Whate'er the story be, the moral's true;
 The wit we lost in town, we find in you.
 Our poets their fled parts may draw from hence,
 And fill their windy heads with sober sense.
 When London votes with Southwark's disagree,
 Here may they find their long-lost loyalty.
 Here busy senates to th' old cause inclin'd,
 May snuff the votes their fellows left behind:
 Your country neighbours, when their grain grows dear,
 May come and find their *last provision* here:
 Whereas we cannot much lament our loss,
 Who neither carry'd back, nor brought one cross.
 We look'd what representatives would bring;
 But they help'd us, just as they did the King.
 Yet we despair not; for we now lay forth
 The Sibyls books to those who know their worth;
 And tho' the first was sacrific'd before,
 These volumes doubly will the price restore.
 Our poet bade us hope this grace to find,
 To whom by long prescription you are kind.
 He, whose undaunted muse, with loyal rage,
 Has never spar'd the vices of the age,
 Here finding nothing that his spleen can raise,
 Is forc'd to turn his satire into praise.

PROLOGUE to his *Royal Highness*,
Upon his first appearance at the *Duke's Theatre*, after his
Return from Scotland, 1682.

By DRYDEN.

IN those cold regions which no summers chear,
Where brooding darkness covers half the year,
To hollow caves the shiv'ring natives go;
Bears range abroad, and hunt in tracks of snow:
But when the tedious twilight wears away,
And stars grow paler at th' approach of day,
The longing clouds to frozen mountains run;
Happy who first can see the glimm'ring sun,
The surly savage offspring disappear,
And curse the bright successor of the year.
Yet, though rough bears in covert seek defence,
White foxes stay, with seeming innocence:
That crafty kind with day-light can dispense.
Still we are throng'd so full with Reynard's race,
That loyal subjects scarce can find a place:
Thus modest truth is cast behind the croud:
Truth speaks too low; hypocrisy too loud.
Let 'em be first to flatter in success;
Duty can stay, but guilt has need to press.
Once, when true zeal the sons of God did call,
To make their solemn shew at Heav'n's Whitehall,
The fawning Devil appear'd among the rest,
And made as good a courtier as the best.
The friends of Job, who rail'd at him before,
Came cap in hand when he had three times more.
Yet late repentance may, perhaps, be true;
Kings can forgive, if rebels can but sue:

A tyrant's power in rigour is exprest;
 The father yearns in the true Prince's breast.
 We grant, an o'ergrown Whig no grace can mend;
 But most are babes, that know not they offend.
 The croud, to restless motion still inclin'd,
 Are clouds, that tack according to the wind.
 Driv'n by their chiefs they storms of hailstones pour;
 Then mourn, and soften to a silent show'r.
 O welcome to this much-offending land,
 The Prince that brings forgiveness in his hand!
 Thus angels on glad messages appear:
 Their first salute commands us not to fear:
 Thus Heav'n, that could constrain us to obey,
 (With rev'rence if we might presume to say)
 Seems to relax the rights of sov'reign sway:
 Permits to man the choice of good and ill,
 And makes us happy by our own free-will.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *J. Banks's* EARL of ESSEX, 1682.

Spoken to the King and Queen at their coming
to the House.

WHEN first the Ark was landed on the shore,
 And Heav'n had vow'd to curse the ground no
 more;

When tops of hills the longing patriarch saw,
 And the new scene of earth began to draw;
 The dove was sent to view the waves decrease,
 And first brought back to man the pledge of peace.
 'Tis needless to apply, when those appear,
 Who bring the olive, and who plant it here.

We have before our eyes the Royal Dove,
Still innocent, as harbinger to love:
The ark is open'd to dismiss the train,
And people, with a better race, the plain.
Tell me, ye pow'rs, why should vain man pursue,
With endless toil, each object that is new,
And for the seeming substance leave the true?
Why shou'd he quit for hopes his certain good,
And loath the manna of his daily food?
Must England still the scene of changes be,
Toft and tempestuous like our ambient sea?
Must still our weather and our wills agree?
Without our blood our liberties we have:
Who that is free would fight to be a slave?
Or, what can wars to after-times assure,
Of which our present age is not secure?
All that our monarch would for us ordain,
Is but t' enjoy the blessings of his reign.
Our land's an Eden, and the main's our fence,
While we preserve our state of innocence:
That lost, then beasts their brutal force employ,
And first their lord, and then themselves destroy.
What civil broils have cost, we know too well:
Oh! let it be enough that once we fell!
And ev'ry heart conspire, and ev'ry tongue,
Still to have such a King, and this King long.

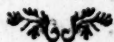


PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Southerne's* LOYAL BROTHERS; or, The
PERSIAN PRINCE. 1682.

POETS, like lawful Monarchs rul'd the stage,
Till Critics, like damn'd Whigs, debauch'd our age.
Mark how they jump: Criticks wou'd regulate
Our theatres, and Whigs reform our state:
Both pretend love, and both (plague rot 'em!) hate.
The Critic humbly seems advice to bring;
The fawning Whig petitions to the King:
But one's advice into a satire slides;
T'other's petition a remonstrance hides.
These will no taxes give, and these no pence;
Critics would starve the Poet, Whigs the Prince.
The Critic all our troops of friends discards;
Just so the Whig wou'd fain pull down the guards.
Guards are illegal, that drive foes away,
As watchful shepherds, that fright beasts of prey.
Kings, who disband such needless aids as these,
Are safe — as long as e'er their subjects please:
And that wou'd be till next Queen Bess's night:
Which thus grave penny chroniclers indite.
Sir Edmond Bury first, ~~in~~ woful wife,
Leads up the show, and milks their maudlin eyes.
There's not a butcher's wife but dribs her part,
And pities the poor pageant from her heart;
Who, to provoke revenge, rides round the fire,
And, with a civil congé, does retire.
But guiltless blood to ground must never fall;
There's Antichrist behind, to pay for all.

The punk of Babylon in pomp appears,
 A lewd old gentleman of seventy years :
 Whose age in vain our mercy would implore;
 For few take pity on an old cast whore.
 The Devil, who brought him to the shame, takes part;
 Sits cheek by jowl, in black, to cheer his heart;
 Like thief and parson in a Tyburn-cart. }
 The word is giv'n, and with a loud huzza
 The mitred puppet from his chair they draw :
 On the slain corps contending nations fall :
 Alas! what's one poor Pope among them all!
 He burns; now all true hearts your triumphs ring;
 And next (for fashion) cry, *God save the King.*
 A needful cry in midst of such alarms,
 When forty thousand men are up in arms.
 But after he's once sav'd, to make amends,
 In each succeeding health they damn his friends: }
 So God begins, but still the Devil ends.
 What if some one, inspir'd with zeal, shou'd call,
 Come, let's go cry, God save him at Whitehall?
 His best friends wou'd not like this over-care,
 Or think him ere the safer for this pray'r.
 Five praying saints are by an act allow'd;
 But not the whole Church-militant in croud.
 Yet, shou'd heav'n all the true petitions drain
 Of Presbyterians, who wou'd Kings maintain,
 Of forty thousand, five wou'd scarce remain. }



EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the same.

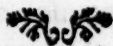
A Virgin poet was serv'd up to-day,
Who, till this hour, ne'er cackled for a play.
He's neither yet a Whig nor Tory-boy;
But, like a girl, whom sev'ral wou'd enjoy,
Begs leave to make the best of his own nat'ral Toy.
Were I to play my callow author's game,
The King's House would instruct me by the name.
There's loyalty to one: I wish no more:
A commonwealth sounds like a common whore.
Let husband or gallant be what they will,
One part of woman is true Tory still.
If any factious spirit should rebel,
Our sex, with ease, can ev'ry rising quell.
Then, as you hope we should your failings hide,
An honest jury for our play provide.
Whigs at their poets never take offence;
They save dull culprits, who have murder'd sense.
Tho' nonsense is a nauseous heavy mass,
The vehicle call'd faction makes it pass.
Faction in play's the commonwealth-man's bribe;
The leaden farthing of the canting tribe:
Tho' void in payment laws and statutes make it,
The neighbourhood, that knows the man, will take it.
'Tis faction buys the votes of half the pit;
Their's is the pension-parliament of wit.
In city-clubs their venom let them vent;
For there 'tis safe, in its own element.
Here, where their madness can have no pretence,
Let them forget themselves an hour of sense.

In one poor isle, why shou'd two factions be?
 Small diff'rence in your vices I can see:
 In drink and drabs both sides too well agree.
 Wou'd there were more preferments in the land:
 If places fell, the party could not stand.
 Of this damn'd grievance ev'ry Whig complains;
 They grunt like hogs, 'till they have got their grains.
 Mean time you see what trade our plots advance;
 We send each year good money into France;
 And they that know what merchandise we need,
 Send o'er true Protestants to mend our breed.

E P I L O G U E by DRYDEN,
 To Mr. N. Lee's CONSTANTINE the GREAT. 1684.

OUR hero's happy in the play's conclusion;
 The holy rogue at last has met confusion:
 Tho' Arrius all along appear'd a saint,
 The last act shew'd him a true Protestant.
 Eusebius (for you know I read Greek authors)
 Reports, that, after all these plots and slaughters,
 The court of Constantine was full of glory,
 And every Trimmer turn'd addressing Tory.
 They follow'd him in herds as they were mad:
 When Clause was King, then all the world was glad.
 Whigs kept the places they possess'd before,
 And most were in a way of getting more;
 Which was as much as saying, Gentlemen,
 Here's power and money to be rogues again.
 Indeed, there were a sort of peaking tools,
 Some call them modest, but I call them fools,
 Men much more loyal, tho' not half so loud;
 But these poor Devils were cast behind the croud.

For bold knaves thrive without one grain of sense,
But good men starve for want of impudence.
Besides all these, there were a sort of wights,
(I think my author calls them Tekelites)
Such hearty rogues against the King and laws,
They favour'd e'en a foreign rebel's cause.
When their own damn'd design was quash'd and aw'd,
At least, they gave it their good word abroad.
As many a man, who, for a quiet life,
Breeds out his bastard, not to noise his wife;
Thus o'er their darling plot these Trimmers cry;
And tho' they cannot keep it in their eye,
They bind it prentice to Count Tekely. }
They b'lieve not the last plot; may I be curst,
If I believe they e'er believ'd the first.
No wonder their own plot no plot they think:
The man, that makes it, never smells the stink.
And now it comes into my head, I'll tell
Why these damn'd Trimmers lov'd the Turks so well.
Th' orig'nal Trimmer, though a friend to no man,
Yet in his heart ador'd a pretty woman;
He knew that Mahomet laid up for ever
Kind black-ey'd rogues, for ev'ry true believer;
And, which was more than mortal man e'er tasted,
One pleasure that for threescore twelvemonths lasted:
To turn for this, may surely be forgiven:
Who'd not be circumcis'd for such a Heav'n?



PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Southern's* DISAPPOINTMENT; OR, the MOTHER
in FASHION. 1684.

Spoken by Mr. *Betterton*.

HOW comes it, gentlemen, that now a-days,
When all of you so shrewdly judge of plays,
Our poets tax you still with want of sense?
All prologues treat you at your own expence.
Sharp citizens a wiser way can go;
They make you fools, but never call you so.
They, in good manners, seldom make a slip,
But treat a common whore with ladyship:
But here each fancy wit at random writes,
And uses ladies as he uses knights.
Our author, young and grateful in his nature,
Vows, that from him no nymph deserves a satire:
Nor will he ever draw—I mean his rhyme,
Against the sweet partaker of his crime.
Nor is he yet so bold an undertaker,
To call men fools; 'tis railing at their Maker.
Besides, he fears to split upon that shelf:
He's young enough to be a fop himself:
And, if his praise can bring you all a-bed,
He swears such hopeful youth no nation ever bred.

Your nurses, we presume, in such a case,
Your father chose, because he lik'd the face;
And, often, they supply'd your mother's place.
The dry nurse was your mother's ancient maid,
Who knew some former slip she ne'er betray'd.

Betwixt 'em both, for milk and sugar-candy,
 Your sucking bottles were well stor'd with brandy.
 Your father, to initiate your discourse,
 Meant to have taught you first to swear and curse;
 But was prevented by each careful nurse.

For, leaving dad and mam, as names too common,
 They taught you certain parts of man and woman.
 I pass your schools; for there when first you came,
 You wou'd be sure to learn the Latin name.
 In colleges you scorn'd the art of thinking,
 But learn'd all moods and figures of good drinking:
 Thence come to town, you practise play, to know
 The virtues of the high dice, and the low.

Each thinks himself a sharper most profound:
 He cheats by pence; is cheated by the pound.
 With these perfections, and what else he gleans,
 The spark sets up for love behind our scenes;
 Hot in pursuit of Princesses and Queens.

There, if they know their man, with cunning carriage,
 Twenty to one but it concludes in marriage.
 He hires some homely room, love's fruits to gather,
 And garret-high rebels against his father:
 But he once dead ———

Brings her in triumph, with her portion down,
 A toilet, dressing-box, and half a crown.
 Some marry first, and then they fall to scowring,
 Which is, refining marriage into whoring,
 Our women batten well on their good-nature;
 All they can rap and rend for the dear creature.
 But while abroad so liberal the colt is,
 Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is.
 Last, some there are, who take their first degrees
 Of lewdness in our middle galleries.

The doughty bullies enter bloody drunk,
 Invade and grabble one another's punk:
 They caterwaul, and make a dismal rout,
 Call sons of whores, and strike, but ne'er lug out:
 Thus while for paultry punk they roar and fickle;
 They make it bawdier than a conventicle.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

To the King and Queen, upon the union of the two
 Companies in 1686.

SINCE faction ebbs, and rogues grow out of fashion,
 Their penny-scribes take care t'inform the nation,
 How well men thrive in this or that plantation:

How Pensylvania's air agrees with Quakers,
 And Carolina's with Associators:
 Both e'en too good for Madmen and for Traitors.

Truth is, our land with saints is so run o'er,
 And every age produces such a store,
 That now there's need of two New-Englands more.

What's this, you'll say, to us and our vocation?
 Only thus much, that we have left our Station,
 And made this Theatre our new Plantation.

The factious natives never cou'd agree;
 But aiming, as they call'd it, to be free,
 Those play-house Whigs set up for property.

Some say, they no obedience paid of late;
 But would new fears and jealousies create;
 'Till topsy-turvy they had turn'd the state.

plain sense, without the talent of foretelling,
Might guess 'twould end in downright knocks and
quelling :

For seldom comes there better of rebelling.

When men will, needlessly, their freedom barter
For lawless pow'r, sometimes they catch a tartar :
There's a damn'd word that rhimes to this, call'd charter.

But, since the victory with us remains,
You shall be call'd to twelve in all our gains;
If you'll not think us saucy for our pains.

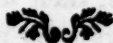
Old men shall have good old plays to delight 'em :
And you, fair ladies and gallants that slight 'em,
We'll treat with good new plays; if our new wits can
write 'em.

We'll take no blund'ring verse, no fustian tumour,
No dribbling love, from this or that perfumer :
No dull fat fool sham'd on the stage for humour.

For, faith, some of 'em such vile stuff have made,
As none but fools or fairies ever play'd;
But 'twas, as shop-men say, to force a trade.

We've giv'n you Tragedies, all sense defying,
And singing men, in woful metre dying;
This 'tis when heavy lubbers will be flying.

All these disasters we well hope to weather;
We bring you none of our old lumber hither :
Whig Poets and Whig Sheriffs may hang together.



EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

On the same occasion.

NEW ministers, when first they get in place,
 Must have a care to please; and that's our case:
 Some laws for publick welfare we design,
 If you, the power supreme, will please to join:
 There are a sort of prattlers in the pit,
 Who either have, or who pretend to wit:
 These noisy sirs so loud their parts rehearse,
 That oft the Play is silenced by the Farce.
 Let such be dumb, this penalty to shun,
 Each to be thought my lady's eldest son.
 But stay: methinks some Vizard Mask I see,
 Cast out her lure from the mid gallery:
 About her all the flutt'ring sparks are rang'd;
 The noise continues though the scene is chang'd:
 Now growling, sputt'ring, wauling, such a clutter,
 'Tis just like puss defendant in a gutter:
 Fine love no doubt; but ere two days are o'er ye,
 The surgeon will be told a woful story.
 Let Vizard Mask her naked face expose,
 On pain of being thought to want a nose:
 Then for your lacqueys, and your train beside,
 (By what-e'er name or title dignify'd)
 They roar so loud, you'd think behind the stairs
 Tom Dove, and all the brotherhood of bears:
 They're grown a nuisance, beyond all disasters;
 We've none so great but their unpaying masters.
 We beg you, sirs, to beg your men, that they
 Wou'd please to give you leave to hear the play.

Next in the Play-house spare your precious lives;
 Think, like good Christians, on your beams and wives:
 Think on your souls; but by your lugging forth,
 It seems you know how little they are worth.
 If none of these will move the warlike mind,
 Think on the helpless whore you leave behind.
 We beg you, last, our scene-room to forbear,
 And leave our goods and chattels to our care.
 Alas! our women are but washy toys,
 And wholly taken up in stage employs:
 Poor willing tits they are: but yet I doubt
 This double duty soon will wear 'em out.
 Then you are watch'd besides with jealous care;
 What if my lady's page should find you there?
 My lady knows t' a tittle what there's in ye;
 No passing your gilt shilling for a guinea.
 Thus, gentlemen, we have summ'd up in short
 Our grievances, from Country, Town, and Court:
 Which humbly we submit to your good pleasure;
 But first vote money, then redress at leisure.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. N. Lee's PRINCESS of CLEVES. 1689.

LADIES! (I hope there's none behind to hear)
 I long to whisper something in your ear:
 A secret, which does much my mind perplex:
 There's treason in the play against our sex.
 A man's that's false to love, that vows and cheats,
 And kisses every living thing he meets.
 A rogue in mode (I dare not speak too broad)
 One that does something to the very bawd.

Out on him, traytor, for a filthy beast;
 Nay, and he's like the pack of all the rest:
 None of 'em stick at mark; they all deceive.
 Some Jew has chang'd the text, I half believe;
 There Adam cozen'd our poor grandame Eve.
 To hide their faults they rap out oaths, and tear:
 Now, tho' we lye, we're too well-bred to swear.
 So we compound for half the sin we owe,
 But men are dipt for soul and body too;
 And, when found out, excuse themselves, pox cant 'em,
 With Latin stuff, *perjuria ridet Amantum*.
 I'm not book-learn'd, to know that word in vogue;
 But I suspect 'tis Latin for a rogue.
 I'm sure, I never heard that skreech-owl hollow'd
 In my poor ears, but separation follow'd.
 How can such perjur'd villains e'er be fav'd?
 Achitophel's not half so false to David.
 With vows and soft expressions to allure,
 They stand, like foremen of a shop, demure:
 No sooner out of sight, but they are gadding,
 And for the next new face ride out a padding.
 Yet, by their favour, when they have been kissing,
 We can perceive the ready money missing.
 Well! we may rail; but 'tis as good e'en wink;
 Something we find, and something they will sink.
 But, since they're at renouncing, 'tis our parts,
 To trump their diamonds, as they trump our hearts.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the same.

A Qualm of Conscience brings me back again,
To make amends to you bespatter'd men.
We women love like cats, that hide their joys,
By growling, squalling, and a hideous noise.
I rail'd at wild young sparks; but, without lying,
Never was man worse thought on for high-flying.
The prodigal of love gives each her part,
And squandering shows, at least a noble heart.
I've heard of men, who, in some lewd lampoon,
Have hir'd a friend, to make their valour known.
That accusation straight this question brings;
What is the man that does such naughty things?
The spaniel lover, like a sneaking fop,
Lies at our feet: He's scarce worth taking up.
'Tis true, such heroes in a play go far;
But chamber practice is not like the bar.
When men such vile, such feint, petitions make,
We fear to give, because they fear to take;
Since modesty's the virtue of our kind,
Pray let it be to our own sex confin'd.
When men usurp it from the female nation,
'Tis but a work of supererogation —
We shew'd a princess in the play, 'tis true,
Who gave her Cæsar more than all his due;
Told her own faults: but I shou'd much abhor
To chuse a husband for my confessor.
You see what fate follow'd the saint-like fool,
For telling tales from out the nuptial school.

Our play a merry comedy had prov'd,
 Had she confess'd so much to him she lov'd.
 'True Presbyterian wives the *means* wou'd try;
 But damn'd confessing is flat popery.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

To Mrs. Behn's WIDOW RANTER. 1690.

HEAV'N save ye, gallants, and this hopeful age;
 Y^e are welcome to the downfall of the stage:
 The fools have labour'd long in their vocation;
 And vice (the manufacture of the nation)
 O'erstocks the town so much, and thrives so well,
 That fops and knaves grow drugs, and will not sell.
 In vain our wares on theatres are shown,
 When each has a plantation of his own.
 His cause ne'er fails; for whatfoe'er he spends,
 There's still God's plenty for himself and friends.
 Shou'd men be rated by poetic rules,
 Lord! what a poll would there be rais'd from fools!
 Mean time poor wit prohibited must lie,
 As if 'twere made some French commodity.
 Fools you will have, and rais'd at vast expence;
 And yet, as soon as seen, they give offence.
 Time was, when none wou'd cry, that oaf was me;
 But now you strive about your pedigree.
 Bauble and cap no sooner are thrown down,
 But there's a mus of more than half the town.
 Each one will challenge a child's part at least;
 A sign the family is well increast.
 Of foreign cattle there's no longer need,
 When we're supply'd so fast with English breed.

Well! flourish, countrymen, drink, swear, and roar;
 Let ev'ry free-born subject keep his whore,
 And wand'ring in the wilderness about,
 At end of forty years not wear her out.
 But when you see these pictures, let none dare
 To own beyond a limb or single share:
 For where the punk is common, he's a sot,
 Who needs will father what the parish got.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Mountfort's* HENRY II. 1693.

Spoken by Mrs. *Bracegirdle*.

THUS you the sad catastrophe have seen,
 Occasion'd by a Mistress and a Queen.
 Queen Eleanor the proud was French, they say;
 But English manufacture got the day.
 Jane Clifford was her name, as books aver:
 Fair Rosamond was but her *Nom de guerre*.
 Now tell me, gallants, wou'd you lead your life
 With such a Mistress, or with such a Wife?
 If one must be your choice, which d'ye approve,
 The curtain lecture, or the curtain love?
 Wou'd ye be godly with perpetual strife,
 Still drudging on with homely Joan your wife;
 Or take your pleasure in a wicked way,
 Like honest whoring Harry in the play?
 I guess your minds: The mistress wou'd be taken,
 And nauseous matrimony sent a packing.
 The devil's in you all; mankind's a rogue;
 You love the bride, but you detest the clog.

After a year, poor spouse is left i' th' lurch,
 And you, like Haynes, return to Mother-Church,
 Or, if the name of Church comes cross your mind,
 Chapels of ease behind our scenes you find.
 The Play-house is a kind of Market-place;
 One chaffers for a voice, another for a face:
 Nay, some of you (I dare not say how many)
 Wou'd buy of me a pen'worth for your penny.
 E'en this poor face (which with my fan-I hide)
 Wou'd make a shift my portion to provide,
 With some small perquisites I have beside.
 Tho' for your love, perhaps, I shou'd not care,
 I could not hate a man that bids me fair.
 What might ensue, 'tis hard for me to tell;
 But I was drench'd to day for loving well,
 And fear the poison that wou'd make me swell.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN.

IF there be yet a few that take delight
 In that which reasonable men should write;
 To them alone we dedicate this night.
 The rest may satisfy their curious itch
 With City Gazettes, or some factious speech,
 Or what-e'er libel, for the publick Good,
 Stirs up the Shrove-tide crew to fire and blood.
 Remove your benches, you apostate pit,
 And take above, twelve pennyworth of wit;
 Go back to your dear dancing on the rope,
 Or see what's worse, the Devil and the Pope.
 The plays that take on our corrupted stage,
 Methinks, resemble the distracted age;

Noise, madness, all unreasonable things,
 That strike at sense, as rebels do at kings.
 The style of Forty-one our poets write,
 And you are grown to judge like Forty-eight.
 Such censures our mistaking audience make,
 That 'tis almost grown scandalous to take.
 They talk of fevers that infect the brains;
 But nonsense is the new disease that reigns.
 Weak stomachs with a long disease oppress,
 Cannot the cordials of strong wit digest.
 Therefore thin nourishment of Farce ye chuse,
 Decoctions of a barley-water muse:
 A meal of Tragedy would make ye sick,
 Unless it were a very tender chick.
 Some scenes in sippets wou'd be worth our time;
 Those would go down; some love that's poach'd in rhyme;
 If these should fail ———
 We must lie down, and, after all our cost,
 Keep holy-day, like watermen in frost;
 While you turn players on the world's great stage,
 And act yourselves the farce of your own age.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Saunders's* TAMERLANE.

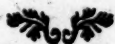
LADIES, the beardless Author of this day,
 Commends to you the fortune of his Play.
 A Woman Wit has often grac'd the stage;
 But he's the first Boy-Poet of our age.
 Early as is the year his fancies blow,
 Like young Narcissus peeping thro' the snow.

Thus Cowley blossom'd soon, yet flourish'd long:
 This is as forward, and may prove as strong.
 Youth with the Fair should always favour find,
 Or we are damn'd dissemblers of our kind.
 What's all this love they put into our parts?
 'Tis but the pit-a-pat of two young hearts.
 Should Hag and Gray-beard make such tender moan,
 Faith, you'd e'en trust 'em to themselves alone, }
 And cry, let's go, here's nothing to be done.
 Since love's our business, as 'tis your delight,
 The Young, who best can practise, best can write.
 What though he be not come to his full pow'r,
 He's mending and improving every hour.
 You sly She-jockies of the box and pit,
 Are pleas'd to find a hot unbroken Wit;
 By management he may in time be made,
 But there's no hope of an old batter'd jade;
 Faint and unnerv'd he runs into a sweat,
 And always fails you at the second heat.

E P I L O G U E by DRYDEN.

YOU saw our Wife was chaste, yet thoroughly try'd,
 And, without doubt, y'are hugely edify'd;
 For, like our Hero, whom we shew'd to-day,
 You think no woman true, but in a Play.
 Love once did make a pretty kind of show;
 Esteem and kindness in one breast would grow: }
 But 'twas heav'n knows how many years ago.
 Now some small chat, and guinea expectation,
 Gets all the pretty creatures in the nation:
 In Comedy your little selves you meet;
 'Tis Covent-garden drawn in Bridges-street.

Smile on our Author then, if he has shown
A jolly nut-brown bastard of your own.
Ah! happy you, with ease and with delight,
Who act those follies, poets toil to write!
The sweating muse does almost leave the chace;
She puffs, and hardly keeps your Protean vices pace.
Pinch you but in one vice, away you fly
To some new frisk of contrariety.
You roll like snow balls, gathering as you run,
And get seven Dev'ls, when dispossest'd of one.
Your Venus once was a Platonick Queen;
Nothing of love beside the face was seen;
But every inch of her you now uncase,
And clap a vizard-mask upon the face.
For sins like these, the zealous of the land,
With little hair, and little or no band,
Declare how circulating pestilences
Watch, every twenty years, to snap offences.
Saturn, e'en now, takes doctoral degrees;
He'll do your work this summer, without fees.
Let all the Boxes, Phœbus, find thy grace,
And, ah, preserve the Eighteen-penny Place!
But for the Pit-Confounders, let 'em go,
And find as little mercy as they show:
The Actors thus, and thus thy Poets pray;
For ev'ry Critick sav'd, thou damn'st a Play.



PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,
To *Beaumont* and *Fletcher's* PROPHECESS. Revived
by Mr. *Dryden*.

Spoken by Mr. *Betterton*.

WHAT Nostradame, with all his art can guess,
The fate of our approaching Prophetess?
A Play, which, like a perspective set right,
Presents our vast expences close to sight;
But turn the tube, and there we sadly view
Our distant gains; and those uncertain too:
A sweeping tax, which on ourselves we raise,
And all, like you, in hopes of better days.
When will our losses warn us to be wise?
Our wealth decreases, and our charges rise.
Money, the sweet allurer of our hopes,
Ebbs out in oceans, and comes in by drops.
We raise new objects to provoke delight;
But you grow fated, ere the second fight.
False men, e'en so you serve your mistresses:
They rise three stories in their tow'ring dress;
And, after all, you love not long enough
To pay the rigging, ere you leave 'em off.
Never content with what you had before,
But true to change, and English men all o'er.
Now honour calls you hence; and all your care
Is to provide the horrid pomp of war.
In plume and scarf, jack-boots, and Bilbo blade,
Your silver goes, that shou'd support our trade.
Go, unkind heroes, leave our stage to mourn;
'Till rich from vanquish'd rebels you return;

And the fat spoils of Teague in triumph draw,
 His Firkin-butter, and his Usquebaugh.
 Go, conqu'rors of your male and female foes;
 Men without hearts, and women without hose.
 Each bring his love a Bogland captive home;
 Such proper pages will long trains become;
 With copper collars, and with brawny backs,
 Quite to put down the fashion of our Blacks.
 Then shall the pious Muses pay their vows,
 And furnish all their laurels for your brows;
 Their tuneful voice shall raise for your delights;
 We want not Poets fit to sing your fights.
 But you, bright Beauties, for whose only sake
 Those doughty Knights such dangers undertake,
 When they with happy gales are gone away,
 With your propitious presence grace our Play;
 And with a sigh their empty seats survey:
 Then think, on that bare bench my servant sat;
 I see him ogle still, and hear him chat;
 Selling facetious bargains, and propounding
 That witty recreation, call'd dum-founding.
 Their loss with patience we will try to bear;
 And wou'd do more, to see you often here:
 That our dead Stage, reviv'd by your fair eyes,
 Under a Female Regency may rise.



PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the University of OXFORD.

Spoken by Mr. Hart, at the acting of the *Silent Woman*.

WHAT Greece, when learning flourish'd, only knew,
 Athenian Judges, you this day renew.
 Here too are annual Rites to Pallas done,
 And here Poetick Prizes lost or won.
 Methinks I see you, crown'd with olives, sit,
 And strike a sacred horror from the pit.
 A Day of Doom is this of your decree,
 Where even the best are but by mercy free:
 A Day, which none but Johnson durst have wish'd to see. }
 Here they, who long have known the useful stage,
 Come to be taught themselves to teach the age.
 As your Commissioners our Poets go,
 To cultivate the virtue which you sow;
 In your Lycæum first themselves refin'd,
 And delegated thence to human-kind.
 But as Ambassadors, when long from home,
 For new instructions to their princes come,
 So Poets, who your precepts have forgot,
 Return, and beg they may be better taught:
 Follies and faults elsewhere by them are shown,
 But by your manners they correct their own.
 Th' illiterate Writer, emperick like, applies
 To minds diseas'd, unsafe, chance, remedies:
 'The Learn'd in Schools, where knowledge first began,
 Studies with care th' anatomy of man;
 Sees virtue, vice, and passions in their cause,
 And fame from science, not from fortune, draws.

So Poetry, which is in Oxford made
 An Art, in London only is a Trade.
 There haughty dunces, whose unlearned pen
 Cou'd ne'er spell grammar, would be reading men,
 Such build their poems the Lucretian way;
 So many huddled atoms make a Play;
 And if they hit in order by some chance,
 They call that nature, which is ignorance,
 To such a fame let mere Town-Wits aspire,
 And their gay nonsense their own Cits admire.
 Our Poet, could he find forgiveness here,
 Would wish it rather than a plaudit there.
 He owns no crown from those Prætorian bands,
 But knows that Right is in the Senate's hands.
 Not impudent enough to hope your praise,
 Low at the Muses feet his wreath he lays,
 And, where he took it up, resigns his bays.
 Kings make their Poets whom themselves think fit,
 But 'tis your suffrage makes authentick Wit.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

Spoken by the same.


NO poor Dutch peasant, wing'd with all his fear,
 Flies with more haste, when the French arms
 draw near,
 Than we with our Poetick Train come down,
 For refuge hither, from th' infected Town:
 Heav'n for our sins this summer has thought fit
 To visit us with all the Plagues of Wit.
 A French Troop first swept all things in its way;
 But those hot Monfieurs were too quick to stay:

Yet, to our cost, in that short time, we find
They left their Itch of Novelty behind.
Th' Italian Merry-Andrews took their place;
And quite debauch'd the Stage with lewd grimace;
Instead of Wit and Humour, your delight
Was there to see two Hobby-horses fight;
Stout *Scaramoucha* with Rush Lance rode in,
And ran a tilt at Centaur *Arlequin*.
For love you heard how amorous Asses bray'd,
And Cats in gutters gave their serenade.
Nature was out of count'nance, and each day
Some new-born monster shewn you for a Play.
But when all fail'd, to strike the Stage quite dumb,
Those wicked engines call'd Machines are come.
Thunder and Lightning now for Wit are play'd,
And shortly scenes in Lapland will be laid:
Art Magick is for Poetry profess;
And Cats and Dogs, and each obscener beast,
To which Ægyptian dotards once did bow,
Upon our English Stage are worshipp'd now.
Witchcraft reigns there, and raises to renown
Macbeth, and Simon Magus of the Town.
Fletcher's despis'd, your Johnson's out of fashion,
And Wit the only drug in all the nation.
In this low ebb our wares to you are shown;
By you those staple Authors worth is known;
For Wit's a manufacture of your own. }
When you, who only can, their scenes have prais'd,
We'll boldly back, and say, their price is rais'd.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

Spoken at OXFORD by Mrs. *Marshall*.

OFT has our Poet wish'd, this happy feat
Might prove his fading Muse's last retreat:
I wonder'd at his wish, but now I find
He fought for quiet, and content of mind;
Which noiseful Towns, and Courts can never know,
And only in the shades like laurels grow.
Youth, ere it sees the world, here studies rest,
And age returning thence concludes it best.
What wonder if we court that happiness
Yearly to share, which hourly you possess,
Teaching e'en you, while the next world we show,
Your peace to value more, and better know?
'Tis all we can return for favours past,
Whose holy memory shall ever last,
For patronage from him whose care presides
O'er ev'ry noble art, and ev'ry science guides:
Bathurst, a name the learn'd with reverence know,
And scarcely more to his own Virgil owe;
Whose age enjoys but what his youth deserv'd,
To rule those Muses whom before he serv'd.
His learning, and untainted manners too,
We find, Athenians, are deriv'd to you:
Such antient hospitality there rests
In yours, as dwelt in the first Grecian breasts,
Whose kindness was religion to their guests.
Such modesty did to our sex appear,
As, had there been no laws, we need not fear,
Since each of you was our protector here.



110 PROLOGUES, and
Converse so chaste, and so strict virtue shown,
As might Apollo with the Muses own.
Till our return, we must despair to find
Judges so just, so knowing, and so kind.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the University of OXFORD.

DISCORD, and plots, which have undone our age,
With the same ruin have o'erwhelm'd the Stage.
Our House has suffer'd in the common woe,
We have been troubled with Scotch rebels too.
Our brethren are from Thames to Tweed departed,
And of our sisters, all the kinder-hearted, }
To Edinburgh gone, or coach'd, or carted.
With Bonny Blewcap there they act all night
For Scotch half crown, in English, three-pence hight.
One nymph, to whom fat Sir John Falstaff's lean,
There with her single person fills the scene.
Another, with long use and age decayed,
Div'd here old Woman, and rose there a Maid.
Our trusty door-keepers of former time
There strut and swagger in heroick rhyme.
Tack but a copper-lace to druggert suit,
And there's a hero made without dispute:
And that, which was a capon's tail before,
Becomes a plume for Indian emperor.
But all his subjects, to express the care
Of imitation, go, like Indians bare:
Lac'd linen there would be a dangerous thing;
It might perhaps a new rebellion bring; }
The Scot, who wore it, wou'd be chosen King.

But why should I these Renegades describe,
 When you yourselves have seen a lewder tribe?
 Teague has been here, and, to this learned Pit,
 With Irish Action slander'd English Wit:
 You have beheld such barb'rous Mac's appear,
 As merited a second massacre:
 Such as, like Cain, were branded with disgrace,
 And had their country stamp'd upon their face.
 When strollers durst presume to pick your purse,
 We humbly thought our broken troop not worse.
 How ill soe'er our action may deserve,
 Oxford's a place, where Wit can never starve.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the University of OXFORD.

THOUGH actors cannot much of learning boast,
 Of all who want it, we admire it most;
 We love the praises of a Learned Pit,
 As we remotely are ally'd to Wit.
 We speak our Poet's Wit, and trade in ore,
 Like those, who touch upon the golden shore:
 Betwixt our judges can distinction make,
 Discern how much, and why, our poems take:
 Mark if the fools, or men of sense, rejoice;
 Whether th' applause be only sound or voice.
 When our sōp gallants, or our city folly
 Clap over-loud, it makes us melancholy:
 We doubt that scene which does their wonder raise,
 And, for their ignorance, contemn their praise.
 Judge then, if we who act, and they who write,
 Shou'd not be proud of giving you delight.

London likes grossly; but this nicer Pit
 Examines, fathoms all the depths of Wit;
 The ready finger lays on every blot;
 Knows what shou'd justly please, and what shou'd not.
 Nature herself lies open to your view;
 You judge by her, what draught of her is true,
 Where out-lines false, and colours seem too faint,
 Where bunglers dawb, and where true Poets paint.
 But by the sacred Genius of this place,
 By ev'ry muse, by each domestick grace,
 Be kind to Wit, which but endeavours well,
 And, where you judge, presumes not to excel.
 Our Poets hither for adoption come,
 As nations su'd to be made free of Rome:
 Not in the suffragating tribes to stand,
 But in your utmost, last, provincial band.
 If his ambition may those hopes pursue,
 Who with religion loves your arts and you,
 Oxford to him a dearer name shall be,
 Than his own Mother University.
 Thebes did his green, unknowing, youth engage:
 He chuses Athens in his riper age.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

TO ALBUMAZAR.

TO say, this Comedy pleas'd long ago,
 Is not enough to make it pass you now.
 Yet, gentlemen, your ancestors had wit;
 When few men censur'd, and when fewer writ.
 And Johnson, of those few the best, chose this,
 As the best model of his master-piece:

Subtle was got by our Albumazar,
That Alchymist by this Astrologer;
Here he was fashion'd, and we may suppose
He lik'd the fashion well, who wore the clothes.
But Ben made nobly His what he did mould;
What was another's lead, becomes his gold:
Like an unrighteous conqueror he reigns,
Yet rules that well, which he unjustly gains.
But this our age such authors does afford,
As make whole plays, and yet scarce write one word:
Who, in this anarchy of wit, rob all,
And what's their plunder, their possession call:
Who, like bold padders, scorn by night to prey,
But rob by sun-shine, in the face of day:
Nay scarce the common ceremony use
Of, stand, Sir, and deliver up your Muse;
But knock the Poet down, and, with a grace,
Mount Pegafus before the owner's face.
Faith, if you have such country Toms abroad,
'Tis time for all true men to leave that road.
Yet it were modest, could it but be said,
They strip the living, but these rob the dead;
Dare with the Mummies of the Muses play,
And make love to them the Ægyptian way;
Or, as a rhiming author would have said,
Join the dead living to the living dead.
Such men in Poetry may claim some part:
They have the license, though they want the art;
And might, where theft was prais'd, for laureats stand
Poets, not of the head, but of the hand.
They make the benefits of others studying,
Much like the meals of politick Jack-Pudding,
Whose dish to challenge no man has the courage;
'Tis all his own when once h' has spit i' th' porridge.

But, gentlemen, you're all concern'd in this;
 You are in fault for what they do amiss:
 For they their thefts still undiscover'd think,
 And durst not steal, unless you please to wink.
 Perhaps, you may award by your decree,
 They should refund; but that can never be.
 For should you letters of reprisal seal,
 These men write that which no man else would steal.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

Spoken at the Revival of *ARVIRAGUS* and *PHILICIA*,
 written by *Lodowick Carell, Esq;*

WITH sickly Actors and an old House too,
 We're match'd with glorious theatres and new,
 And with our ale-house scenes, and clothes bare worn,
 Can neither raise old Plays, nor new adorn.
 If all these ills could not undo us quite,
 A brisk French troop is grown your dear delight;
 Who with broad bloody bills call you each day,
 To laugh and break your buttons at their play;
 Or see some serious piece, which we presume,
 Is fall'n from some incomparable plume;
 And therefore, Messieurs, if you'll do us grace,
 Send lacquies early to preserve your place.
 We dare not on your privilege intrench,
 Or ask you why you like 'em? they are French.
 Therefore some go with courtesy exceeding,
 Neither to hear nor see, but shew their breeding:
 Each lady striving to out-laugh the rest;
 To make it seem they understood the jest.

Their countrymen come in, and nothing pay,
 To teach us English where to clap the Play:
 Civil igad! Our hospitable land
 Bears all the charge, for them to understand:
 Mean time we languish, and neglected lie,
 Like wives, while you keep better company;
 And wish for your own sakes, without a satire,
 You'd less good breeding, or had more good-nature.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN.

Spoken the first Day of the King's House acting
 after the Fire.

SO shipwreck'd passengers escape to land,
 So look they, when on the bare beach they stand
 Dropping and cold, and their first fear scarce o'er,
 Expecting famine on a desert shore.
 From that hard climate we must wait for bread,
 Whence e'en the natives, forc'd by hunger, fled.
 Our Stage does human chance present to view,
 But ne'er before was seen so sadly true:
 You are chang'd too, and your pretence to see
 Is but a nobler name for charity.
 Your own provisions furnish out our feasts,
 While you the founders make yourselves the guests.
 Of all mankind beside fate had some care,
 But for poor Wit no portion did prepare,
 'Tis left a rent-charge to the brave and fair.
 You cherish'd it, and now its fall you mourn,
 Which blind unmanner'd zealots make their scorn,
 Who think that fire a judgment on the Stage,
 Which spar'd not temples in its furious rage.

But as our new-built City rises higher,
 So from old Theatres may new aspire,
 Since fate contrives magnificence by fire.
 Our great metropolis does far surpass
 Whate'er is now, and equals all that was:
 Our Wit as far does foreign Wit excel,
 And, like a King, shou'd in a Palace dwell.
 But we with golden hopes are vainly fed,
 Talk high, and entertain you in a shed:
 Your presence here (for which we humbly sue)
 Will grace old Theatres, and build up new.

P R O L O G U E by DRYDEN,

For the Women, when they acted at the old Theatre
 in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*.

WERE none of you, gallants, e'er driven so hard,
 As when the poor kind soul was under guard,
 And cou'd not do't at home, in some by-street
 To take a lodging, and in private meet?
 Such is our case, we can't appoint our house,
 The lover's old and wonted rendezvous;
 But hither to this trusty nook remove;
 The worse the lodging is, the more the love.
 For much good pastime, many a dear sweet hug,
 Is stol'n in garrets on the humble rug.
 Here's good accommodation in the pit,
 The grave demurely in the midst may sit;
 And so the hot Burgundian on the side
 Ply Vizard Mask, and o'er the benches stride:
 Here are convenient upper boxes too,
 For those that make the most triumphant show;
 All that keep coaches must not sit below.

There, gallants, you betwixt the acts retire,
 And at dull Plays have something to admire:
 We, who look up, can your addressees mark;
 And see the creatures coupled in the ark:
 So we expect the lovers, braves, and wits;
 The gaudy House with Scenes will serve for cits.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

For the King's House.

WE act by fits and starts, like drowning men,
 But just peep up, and then pop down again.

Let those, who call us wicked, change their sense;
 For never men liv'd more on providence.

Not lott'ry cavaliers are half so poor,
 Nor broken cits, nor a vacation whore.

Not courts, nor courtiers living on the rents
 Of the three last ungiving parliaments:

So wretched, that, if Pharaoh could divine,
 He might have spared his dream of seven lean kine,
 And chang'd his vision for the Muses Nine. }

The Comet, that, they say, portends a dearth,
 Was but a vapour drawn from Play-house earth:
 Pent there since our last Fire, and, Lilly says,
 Foreshews our change of state, and thin Third-days.

'Tis not our want of Wit that keeps us poor,
 For then the Printer's Press would suffer more.

Their pamphleteers each day their venom spit;
 They thrive by Treason, and we starve by Wit.

Confess the truth, which of you has not laid
 Four farthings out to buy the Hatfield Maid?

Or, which is duller yet, and more wou'd spite us,
 Democritus his Wars with Heraclitus?

118 PROLOGUES, and

Such are the authors, who have run us down,
 And exercis'd you criticks of the town.
 Yet these are pearls to your lampooning Rhimes,
 Y' abuse yourselves more dully than the times.
 Scandal, the Glory of the English nation,
 Is worn to rags, and scribbled out of fashion.
 Such harmless thrusts, as if, like fencers wise,
 They had agreed their play before their prize.
 Faith, they may hang their harps upon the willows;
 'Tis just like children when they box with pillows.
 Then put an end to civil wars for shame;
 Let each knight-errant, who has wrong'd a dame,
 Throw down his pen, and give her, as he can,
 The satisfaction of a gentleman.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN.

GALLANTS, a bashful Poet bids me say,
 He's come to lose his maidenhead to-day.
 Be not too fierce; for he's but green of age,
 And ne'er, till now, debauch'd upon the Stage.
 He wants the suff'ring part of resolution,
 And comes with blushes to his execution.
 Ere you deflower his muse, he hopes the pit
 Will make some settlement upon his wit.
 Promise him well before the Play begin;
 For he wou'd fain be cozen'd into sin.
 'Tis not but that he knows you mean to fail;
 But, if you leave him after being frail,
 He'll have, at least, a fair pretence to rail;
 To call you base, and swear you us'd him ill,
 And put you in the new deserters bill.

Lord, what a troop of perjur'd men we see;
Enow to fill another Mercury!
But this the ladies may with patience brook:
Theirs are not the first colours you forsook.
He wou'd be loth the beauties to offend;
But, if he shou'd, he's not too old to mend.
He's a young plant, in his first year of bearing;
But his friend swears he will be worth the rearing.
His gloss is still upon him: Though 'tis true
He's yet unripe, yet take him for the blue.
You think an Apricot half green is best;
There's sweet and sour, and one side good at least.
Mangos and Limes, whose nourishment is little,
Though not for food, are yet preserv'd for pickle.
So this green Writer may pretend at least.
To whet your stomachs for a better feast.
He makes this difference in the sexes too;
He sells to men, he gives himself to you.
To both he wou'd contribute some delight;
A meer poetical Hermaphrodite.
Thus he's equipp'd, both to be woo'd, and woo;
With arms offensive, and defensive too;
'Tis hard, he thinks, if neither part will do.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *N. Lee's* THEODOSIUS; or, the Force of Love.

WIT long oppress'd, and fill'd at last with rage,
Thus in a sullen mood rebukes the age.

What loads of fame do modern heroes bear,

For an inglorious, long, and lazy war?

Who for some skirmish, or a safe retreat,

(Not to be dragg'd to battle) are call'd great.

But oh! what do ambitious statesmen gain,

Who into private chests whole nations drain?

What sums of gold they hoard, is daily known,

To all men's cost, and sometimes to their own.

Your lawyer too, that like an *O Yes* bawls,

That drowns the Market-Higler in the stalls,

That seems begot, conceiv'd, and born in brawls,

Yet thrives: He and his crowd get what they please,

Swarming all Term-time thro' the Strand like bees,

They buz at Westminster, and lye for fees.

The godly too their way of getting have;

But none so much as your fanatick knave:

Wisely the wealthiest livings they refuse,

Who by the fattest bishopricks would lose;

Who with short hair, large ears, and small blue band,

True rogues, their own, not God's elect command.

Let pigs then be prophane; but broth's allow'd,

Possets and christian caudles may be good

Meet-helps, to reinforce a brother's blood:

Therefore each female saint he doth advise,

With groans, and hums, and has and gogling eyes,

To rub him down, and make the spirit rise:

While with his zeal, transported from the ground,
 He mounts, and sanctifies the sisters round.
 On poets only no kind star e'er smil'd,
 Curst fate has damn'd 'em ev'ry mother's child:
 Therefore he warns his brothers of the stage,
 To write no more for an ungrateful age.
 Think what penurious masters you have serv'd;
 Tasso run mad, and noble Spenser starv'd.
 Turn then, who e'er thou art, that can't write well,
 Thy ink to gall, and in lampoons excel.
 Forswear all honesty, traduce the Great,
 Grow impudent, and rail against the State;
 Bursting with spleen, abroad thy pasquils send,
 And chuse some libel-spreader for thy friend:
 The wit and want of Timon point thy mind,
 And for thy satire-subject chuse mankind.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

THREE happy they that never writ before;
 How pleas'd and bold they quit the safer shore:
 Like some new Captain of the City Bands,
 That with big looks in Finsbury commands,
 Swell'd with huge ale, he cries, beat, beat a drum;
 Pox on the French King, uds-bud let him come:
 Give me ten thousand Red-coats, and alloo,
 We'll firke his Crequi and his Conde too.
 Thus the young scriblers mankind's sense disdain;
 For ignorance is sure to make 'em vain;
 But far from vanity, or dang'rous pride,
 Our cautious poet courts you to his side:

For why should you be scorn'd, to whom are due
All the good days that ever Authors knew?
If ever gay, 'tis you that make 'em fine;
The pit and boxes make the Poet dine, }
And he scarce drinks but of the Critick's wine.
Old writers should not for vain-glory strive;
But like old mistresses, think how to thrive;
Be fond of every thing their keepers say,
At least till they can live without a Play.
Like one that knows the trade, and has been bit,
She doats and fawns upon her wealthy cit, }
And swears she loves him, merely for his wit.
Another, more untaught than a Walloon, }
Antick and ugly, like an old Baboon,
She swears, is an accomplish'd Beau-garçon;
Turns with all winds, and sails with all desires; }
All hearts in city, town, and court she fires,
Young callow lords, lean knights, and driv'ling squires. }
She in resistless flattery finds her ends,
Gives thanks for fools, and makes ye all her friends;
So should wise Poets seek an awkward age,
For they are prostitutes upon the stage:
To stand on points were foolish and ill-bred,
As for a lady to be nice in bed:
Your wills alone must their performance measure,
And you may turn 'em ev'ry way for pleasure.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. N. Lee's LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

Written by Mr. Duke.

LONG has the tribe of Poets on the Stage,
Groan'd under persecuting Criticks rage;
But with the sound of railing and of rhyme,
Like bees united by the tinkling chime,
The little stinging insects swarm the more,
And buz is greater than it was before.
But oh! you leading voters of the pit,
That infect others with your too much wit;
That well-affected members do seduce,
And with your malice poison half the house;
Know your ill-manag'd arbitrary sway
Shall be no more endur'd, but ends this day.
Rulers of abler conduct we will chuse,
And more indulgent to a trembling Muse;
Women for ends of government more fit,
Women shall rule the Boxes and the Pit,
Give laws to love, and influence to wit.
Find me one Man of Sense in all your roll,
Whom some one Woman has not made a fool.
Even business, that intolerable load,
Under which man does groan, and yet is proud,
Much better they can manage wou'd they please;
'Tis not their want of wit, but love of ease.
For, spite of art, more wit in them appears;
Though we boast ours, and they dissemble theirs:
Wit once was ours, and shot up for a while,
Set shallow in a hot and barren soil;

But when transplanted to a richer ground,
 Has in their Eden its perfection found.
 And 'tis but just they shou'd our wit invade,
 Whilst we set up their painting, patching trade;
 As for our courage, to our shame 'tis known,
 As they can raise it, they can pull it down.
 At their own weapons they our bullies awe;
 Faith, let them make an anti-salick law,
 Prescribe to all mankind, as well as plays,
 And wear the breeches, as they wear the bays.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

NO cringing sirs, the Poet's champion I
 Have sworn to stand, and ev'ry judge defy;
 But why each bullying critick should I name,
 A judge whose only business is to damn?
 While you your arbitrary fist advance
 At wit, and dust it like a boor of France;
 Who, without shew of reason or pretence,
 Condemn a man to die for speaking sense;
 Howe'er we term'd you once the wise, the strong,
 Know we have born your impotence too long:
 You that above your fires presume to soar,
 And are but copies dawb'd in miniature;
 You that have nothing right in heart nor tongue,
 But only to be resolute in wrong:
 Who sense affect with such an awkward air,
 As if a Frenchman should become severe;
 Or an Italian make his wife a jest,
 Like Spaniards pleasant, or

That rank the noblest Poets with the vile,
And look yourselves in a Plebeian stile;
But with an oath —————
False as your wit and judgment now I swear,
By the known maidenheads of each theatre;
Nay, by my own, the Poets shall not stand,
Like Shrovetide cocks, the pelt of every hand.
Let not the purblind Critick's sentence pass,
That shoots the Poet through an optick glass;
No peals of ill-plac'd praise from galleries come,
Nor punk below to clap, or hiss, presume;
Let her not cackle as the fops that flout her,
Nor cluck the squires that use to pipp about her;
No full-blown blockhead, bloated, like an ox,
Traverse the pit, with damme, what a pox.
Know then for ev'ry misdemeanor here
I'll be more stabbing, sharp, and more severe,
Than the fell she that on her keeper comes,
Who in his drink last night laid waste her rooms;
Thunder'd her china, damn'd her quality,
Her glasses broke, and tore her Point Venie;
That dragg'd her by the hair, and broke her head,
A chamber lion, but a lamb in bed:
Like her I'll teize you for your midnight storming,
For your all talking, and your no performing;
You that with monstrous judgment force the Stage,
You fribling, fumbling keepers of the age.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. N. Lee's MITHRIDATES, King of PONTUS.

NOT careful leaders, when the trumpets call
 Their martial squadrons on, to stand or fall,
 Toss'd with more doubts, than careful Poets are,
 When vent'rous wit for folly does prepare;
 When humming voices bid the play begin,
 And the last flourish calls the Prologue in.
 Here you, like dreadful warriors judging fit:
 And in full council, try all writers wit.
 To some, for sense renown'd, our authors bow;
 And what you doom, for a just fate allow:
 But sure far less such judges Poets dread,
 Than those raw blades who will not let them plead,
 But, e'er they can be heard, cry, shoot 'em dead.
 These pyrates, that both arms and wit debase;
 Who fields, and poems with their spleen disgrace,
 Poets and warriors, both should have in chase:
 These libellers, who noblest flights despise,
 Yet when a pan but flashes, shut their eyes;
 Who write lampoons, and vilely get a name
 By others infamy, and live on shame;
 Fifes, whistlers, of the justest sense, not fit
 To be the powder-monkeys of true wit:
 Mimicks, like apes, what's ill from heads they drain,
 And live upon the vermin of a brain.
 Neglected these, and trusting to your aid,
 To Beauty our last vows, like yours, are made:

Beauty, which still adorns the op'ning list,
 Which Cæsar's heart vouchsafes not to resist:
 To that alone devoted is this day;
 For, by the Poet, I was bid to say,
 In the first draught, 'twas meant the Lady's Play.

EPILOGUE

To Mr. N. Lee's CÆSAR BORGIA.

WELL, then be you his judges; what pretence
 Made them roar out, this Play would give offence?
 Had he the Pope's effigies meant to burn,
 And kept for sport his ashes in an urn;
 To try if reliques would perform, at home,
 But half those miracles they do at Rome;
 More could not have been said, nor more been done,
 To damn this Play about the court and town:
 Not if he 'ad shewn their philters, charms and rage,
 Nay, conjur'd up Pope Joan to please the age,
 And had her breeches search'd upon the stage.
 First then, he brings a scandal on the gown,
 And makes a priest both lecher and buffoon;
 Why, was no fool yet ever made a Flamen,
 But dulness quite entail'd upon the lay-men?
 Or was it ever heard in Rome before,
 That any priest was question'd for his whore?
 Yet more, the horrid chair, the midnight show —
 He says 'twas done two hundred years ago:
 He only points their ways of murdering then;
 If you must damn, spare the historian's pen,
 And damn those rogues that act 'em o'er again.
 But Dominicks, Franciscans, Hermits, Fryars,
 Shall breed no more a race of zealous lyars;

Villains, who for religion's propagation,
 Come here disguis'd in ev'ry mean vocation,
 And sit in stalls to spy upon the nation.
 Old emissaries shall their trade forbear,
 Spread no more Savoy reliques, bones and hair,
 Shall sell no more like baubles in a fair:
 Monks under ground shall cease to earth like moles,
 And Father Lewis leave his lurking holes;
 Get no more thirty pounds for a blind story,
 Of freeing a Welch soul from purgatory.
 Jesuits in Rome shall quite forswear their function,
 And not for gold give whores the Extreme Unction:
 High English whores, that have all vices past,
 Shall cease to turn true Catholicks at last,
 When poets write, though by exactest rules,
 And are not judg'd by knaves, and damn'd by fools.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. N. Lee's CONSTANTINE the GREAT.

WHAT think ye meant wise Providence when first
 Poets were made? I'd tell you, if I durst;
 That 'twas in contradiction to Heav'ns word,
 That when its spirit o'er the waters stirr'd,
 When it saw All, and said that All was good,
 'The creature Poet was not understood.
 For, were it worth the pains of six long days,
 To mould retailers of dull third-day plays,
 That starve out threescore years in hopes of Bays?
 'Tis plain they ne'er were of the first creation,
 But came of mere equiv'cal generation:
 Like rats in ships, without coition bred,
 As hated too as they are, and unfed.

Nature their species sure must needs disown,
 Scarce knowing poets, less by poets known.
 Yet this poor thing, so scorn'd, and set at nought,
 Ye all pretend to, and would fain be thought.
 Disabled wasting whore-masters are not
 Prouder to own the brats they never got,
 Than fumbling, itching rhymers of the town,
 T' adopt some base-born song that's not their own.
 Spite of his state, my lord sometimes descends,
 To please the importunity of friends.
 The dullest he thought most for business fit,
 'Twill venture his bought place to aim at wit;]
 And though he sinks with his employs of state,
 Till common sense forsake him, he'll translate.
 The poet and the whore alike complains
 Of trading quality, that spoils their gains;
 The lords will write, and ladies will have swains.
 Therefore, all you who have male-issue born,
 Under the starving Sign of Capricorn;
 Prevent the malice of their stars in time,
 And warn them early from the sin of rhyme:
 Tell 'em how Spenser starv'd, how Cowley mourn'd,
 How Butler's faith and service was return'd;
 And if such warning they refuse to take,
 This last experiment, O parents! make:
 With hands behind them see th' offender ty'd,
 The parish whip, and beadle by his side;
 Then lead him to some stall that does expose
 The authors he loves most, there rub his nose;
 Till like a spaniel lash'd, to know command,
 He by the due correction understand,
 To keep his brains clean, and not foul the land:
 Till he against his nature learn to strive,
 And get the knack of dullness how to thrive.

EPILOGUE

To Mr. Lee's SOPHONISBA, spoken at Oxford.

TO this learn'd audience gladly we submit
 At once our action and our poet's wit.
 Whose shades, well pleas'd, to these fam'd seats repair,
 To hear the muses breathe their native air:
 Free from the partial censure of the town,
 Where senseless faction runs the poet down;
 Where flutt'ring hectors on the vizard fall,
 One half o'th' play they spend in noise and brawl,
 Sleep out the rest, then wake and damn it all.
 To you the labour'd scene is better known,
 In which no poets have excell'd your own.
 When some fam'd hero on the stage is seen,
 You strait reflect such was his god-like mien;
 To such extent did his vast conquests swell,
 He reign'd thus glorious, thus untimely fell:
 Knowing th' original, you the copy praise,
 And crown the artist with deserved bays.
 Thus to their merits we our poets leave,
 But for our selves your milder censure crave,
 That all defects i'th' action you'd impute
 T' our straitned stage, 'tis ours, the Womens suit.
 The gown to beauty never was unkind,
 But form'd by that th' ideas of the mind.
 'Twas from the schools our first respects we gain'd,
 Who of our sex their sciences have feign'd.
 Thus were the muses, thus the graces dress'd,
 And Plato thus his virtue has exprest.
 We know what's due to Sophonisba's fame,
 And more to Rosalinda's chaster name.

Nor can we wholly ignorant appear,
 Of those learn'd languages that flourish here.
 Be not surpriz'd if we invade your right,
 And Ovid's or Catullus' loves recite,
 Or pass from Virgil's labours of *Æneas*,
 To *Menin æide Thea Peleïadeo Achilæos*.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. N. Lee's NERO, EMPEROR OF ROME.

GOOD plays, and perfect sense as scarce are grow
 As civil women in this damn'd lewd town.
 Plain sense is despicable as plain clothes,
 As English hats, bone-lace, or woollen hose.
 'Tis your brisk fool that is your Man of note;
 Yonder he goes, in the embroider'd coat;
 Such wenching eyes, and hands so prone to rustle;
 The genteel sling, the trip and modish shuffle;
 Salt soul and flame, as gay as any prince:
 Thus taggs and silks make up your men of sense.
 I'm told that some are present here to day,
 Whoe'er they see resolve to damn this play,
 So much wou'd interest with ill-nature sway.
 But ladies, you we hope, will prove more civil,
 And charm these wits that damn beyond the devil;
 Then let each critick here, all hell inherit,
 You have attractions that can lay a spirit.
 A bloody fatal play you'll see to night,
 I vow to God, 't has put me in a fright.
 The meanest waiter huffs, looks big, and struts,
 Gives breast a blow, then hand on hilt he puts;
 'Tis a fine age, a tearing thund'ring age,
 Pray heav'n this thund'ring does not crack the stage:

This play I like not now——

And yet for ought I know, it may be good,
But still I hate this fighting, wounds and blood.
Why what the devil have I to do with honour?
Let heroes court her, I cry, pox upon her:
All tragedies i'gad to me sound odly,
I can no more be serious, than you godly.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

HOW dull, how grave, and how precise ye sit,
As if ye had acted love, not tasted wit.
When the tricks done, like wine unstopt ye pall
After enjoyment, thus it's with you all.
Your modish plays like jaunty misses shou'd
Be bravely drest, high flown, more fine than good;
For clothes attract ye more than flesh and blood. }
Like cover'd viands beauties hid from sight,
Raise drooping fancy up to new delight:
For you gallants, ye gay brisk witty men, }
He knows your killing trade, your damning strain;
Ye can as well wenches and drink refrain.
Yet faith for my sweet sake be kind to night,
Or may this heavy curse upon you light:
May each gallant that has an assignation,
Be jilted after four hours expectation;
Or if the masked gentlewoman come,
Spite of long scarf, may she be dogg'd from home.
May ye——
In height of titillation hear a rapping,
And then the jealous cuckold take ye napping.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Lee's* GLORIANA; or, the Court of Aug. Cæsar.

HE whose attempt is shewn this night to please,
 Beheld me entring, and my arm did seize,
 Cry'd, Madam, stay, stay but one minute more;
 But I, your servant, left him at the door.
 How dear, and yet how dreadful is the night,
 That makes a Poet, or undoes him quite?
 Such is the night, when a kind-hearted maid
 Becomes a sacrifice to bridal-bed:
 She fears to give what yet she wishes past,
 Cries fye, no, and drives it to the last.
 If to be brought o'th' stage so much can fright,
 What devil makes you all so mad to write?
 But hold, let me consider ——
 Wit which was formerly but recreation,
 Is now become the business of the nation;
 Prentices write lampoons, your Justices
 Have quirks for courtiers late debaucheries,
 And constables with quibbles break the peace.
 Your formal citizen turns man of sense,
 And has to ingenuity pretence:
 Treats miss in box, which was but punk with you,
 Gripes her craz'd knee, and treads upon her toe,
 And cries, I' sack, my dear, this play will do:
 With beard precise his verdict dares pronounce,
 Who by predestination is a dunce:
 All will be censuring a man that writes,
 And praise or damn him like a man that fights.

With boldness therefore both should be inspir'd,
 The stout and witty should alike be fir'd:
 Poets, like men of courage, that begin,
 Should still push forward when they're enter'd in;
 Till certain of applause they write with ease,
 And with just forces are resolv'd to please:
 The little wits of course will then obey,
 And briskly swear the fashionable way,
 To all that those insipidly can say:
 So a young sharp-set bully——
 With famine pinch'd, and given much to think,
 Who thirsts for fame, but thirsts much more for drink,
 Resolves to perish, or enhance his name,
 And gives not o'er till he proves cock o'th' game;
 Then he who lately seem'd like winter bare,
 Comes forth like summer loosely clad and clear;
 He drives the 'squires with breath of pantaloons,
 And the least word he speaks is Blood and Wounds.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

YOUR servants, gentlemen: 'tis a long time
 Since I had th' honour to converse with you
 in rhyme;
 They told me at t' other house y' had left us quite,
 And I was going to hang myself out-right,
 But for the hopes of pleasing you to night:
 For what's insipid life to them or me,
 Without the favour of your company?
 Good faith I'm very glad to see you here,
 'Tis well you can at a new play appear:

This winter you forsaking all the old,
Kept up one while of a damn'd pocky cold;
Some few came here, but who the lord can tell,
All were shrunk up like snails within their shell;
Huge Brandenburg had so disguis'd each one,
That from your coachman you could scarce be known;
And then you droop'd as if half-drown'd you came
Scap'd from North-Holland, or from Amsterdam;
And cough'd, heav'n save you, with as grave a motion,
As you'd been at church, where 'tis devotion.
The ladies too neglecting every grace,
Mob'd up in night-clothes, came with lace to face,
The tow'r upon the forehead all turn'd back,
And stuck with pins like th' man i'th' almanack.
The misses, those delights of human kind,
No longer in their dear side-boxes shin'd,
But each to chamber-practice did retire,
With ale and apples, and a sea-coal fire:
Now this misfortune we by yours have found,
Your cold still sticks by us, though you are sound.
But, first, what makes it now so hard, I pray,
To get you here but just at a new play?
We've play'd t' oblige you all that's in our pow'rs,
We've play'd and play'd ourselves e'en out of doors;
And yet we cannot find one way to pin ye,
You're grown so nice, I think the devil's in ye.
But hold, there's one way yet to get your praise,
Ill-treating you your appetites may raise;
Lampoons and libels we for plays must write,
Criticks, like lovers pall'd with their delight,
Always esteem those kisses best that bite.
We'll deal with you, gallants, in your own way,
And treat you like those punks that love for pay;

Cartwright and I, dress'd like two thund'ring whores,
 With rods will stand behind the play-house doors,
 And firk ye up each day to pleasures dully,
 As Jenny Cromwell does, or Betty Buly.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. Lee's RIVAL QUEENS; or, the Death of
Alexander the Great.

Written by Sir *Car Scroop*, Bart.

HOW hard the fate is of the scribbling drudge,
 Who writes to all, when yet so few can judge!
 Wit, like religion, once divine was thought;
 And the dull crowd believ'd as they were taught;
 Now each fanatick fool presumes t' explain
 The text, and does the sacred writ profane:
 For, while your wits each others fall pursue,
 The fops usurp the power belongs to you.
 You think y' are challeng'd in each new play-bill,
 And here you come for trial of your skill;
 Where fencer like you one another hurt,
 While with your wounds you make the rabble sport.
 Others there are that have the brutal will
 To murder a poor play, but want the skill.
 They love to fight, but seldom have the wit
 To spy the place where they may thrust and hit;
 And therefore, like some bully of the town,
 Ne'er stand to draw, but knock the poet down.
 With these, like hogs in gardens, it succeeds,
 They root up all, and know not flow'rs from weeds.
 As for you, sparks, that hither come each day,
 To act your own, and not to mind our play;

Rehearse your usual follies to the pit,
 And with loud nonsense drown the stage's wit;
 Talk of your clothes, your last debauches tell,
 And witty bargains to each other sell;
 Glout on the silly she, who for your sake
 Can vanity and noise for love mistake;
 Till the coquet sung in the next lampoon
 Is by her jealous friends sent out of town.
 For, in this duelling, intriguing age,
 The love you make is like the war you wage:
 Y'are still prevented e'er you come t'engage.
 But 'tis not to such trifling foes as you,
 The mighty Alexander deigns to sue;
 Ye Persians of the pit he does despise,
 But to the men of sense for aid he flies;
 On their experienc'd arms he now depends,
 Nor fears he odds, if they but prove his friends:
 For as he once a little handful chose,
 The num'rous armies of the world t' oppose,
 So back'd by you, who understand the rules,
 He hopes to rout the mighty host of fools.]

EPILOGUE

To the same.

WHate'er they mean, yet ought they to be curst,
 Who this censorious age did polish first:
 Who the best play, for one poor error blame,
 As priests against our ladies arts declaim,
 And for one patch both soul and body damn.
 But what does more provoke the actor's rage,
 (For we must shew the grievance of the stage)

Is, that our women which adorn each play,
 Bred at our cost, become at length our prey:
 While green and four, like trees we bear them all,
 But when they're mellow, strait to you they fall:
 You watch 'em bare and squab, and let 'em rest,
 But with the first young down you snatch the nest.
 Pray leave those poaching tricks, if you are wise,
 E'er we take out our letters of reprimand.
 For we have vow'd to find a sort of toys
 Known to black fryars, a tribe of chopping boys:
 If once they come, they'll quickly spoil your sport;
 There's not one lady will receive your court;
 But for the youth in petticoats run wild,
 With oh, the archest wag, the sweetest child,
 The panting breast, white hands, and lilly feet
 No more shall your pal'd thoughts with pleasure meet.
 The woman in boy clothes, all boy shall be,
 And never raise your thoughts above the knee.
 Well, if our women knew how false you are,
 They wou'd stay here, and this new trouble spare:
 Poor souls, they think all gospel you relate,
 Charm'd with the noise of settling an estate:
 But when at last your appetites are full,
 And the tir'd Cupid grows, with action, dull;
 You'll find some trick to cut off the entail,
 And send 'em back to us all worn and stale.
 Perhaps they'll find our stage, while they have rang'd
 To some vile canting conventicle, chang'd:
 Where, for the sparks who once resorted there
 With their curl'd wigs that scented all the air,
 They'll see grave blockheads with short greasy hair.
 Green-aprons, steeple-hats, and collar-hands;
 Dull sniv'ling rogues that wring, not clap, their hands;

Where, for gay punks that drew the shining crowd,
 And misses that in vizards laugh'd aloud,
 They'll hear young sisters sigh, see matrons old,
 To their chop'd cheeks their pickled kerchers hold,
 Whose zeal too might persuade, in spite to you,
 Our flying angels to augment their crew;
 While Farringdon their hero struts about 'em,
 And ne'er a damning critick dares to flout 'em.

PROLOGUE by Mr. MOUNTFORT,
 To Mr. N. Lee's MASSACRE of PARIS.

THIS day we shew you the most bloody rage
 That ever did religious fiends engage;
 A reconcilment, with a wedding-feast,
 While murder was the treat for ev'ry guest:
 Which well may prove to ages yet to come,
 The faith of France, the charity of Rome.
 France by the most detested perjury,
 Enslav'd its subjects, who by laws were free.
 No sacrament can this great hero bind,
 Oaths are weak shackles for his mighty mind,
 And worse than heathens does he persecute;
 His priests want sense and learning to dispute;
 But weak divines by strong dragoons confute:
 And whoe'er doubts of any priestly maggot,
 Th' heretick dog must be convinc'd by faggot.
 With Rome's religion and French government,
 What slave so abject as to be content?
 Now, idle malecontent, what is't you'd have?
 Would you be an idolater or slave?
 What do you murmur for, because you're free,
 And this blest'd isle enjoys its liberty?

Crofs but the narrow seas, and you will find
 Slav'ry and superstition to your mind.
 Take with you all your friends that grumble too,
 The land will happily be rid of you:
 Then all as one with our great prince combin'd,
 And his allies by sacred union join'd,
 Will such false bloody tyrants still oppose,
 Till none shall dare to own the name of foes.

E P I L O G U E

To the same by Mr. POWELL.

HOW wise are they, that can with patience bear,
 And just reflections moderately hear,
 Unmov'd by passion, as unsway'd by fear! }
 To them we dedicate this play to night,
 That having long been banish'd from the light,
 Hush'd and imprison'd close as in the tow'r,
 Half press'd to death by a dispensing pow'r;
 To take a lawful trial for each fact,
 Is just come out by th' Habeas Corpus act.
 Rome's friends, no doubt, suppos'd there might be
 shown }
 Just such an entertainment of their own;
 'The Plot, the Protestant; the Stage, the Town.
 But no such fear our Hugonots alarm'd;
 True English hearts are always better arm'd;
 For if the valiant in a little town,
 Batter'd and starving, their brave cause durst own;
 If peasants scorning death, can guard our walls,
 And the mild priesthood turn to generals,
 Britons stand firm, and in short time you'll see,
 Your own and neighb'ring realms, serene and free, }
 Clear'd from the choaking fogs of popery.

No Massacres, nor Revolutions fear;
 Affairs are strangely alter'd since last year:
 Infallibility himself does run,
 The garden's weeded, and the moles are gone.
 Not gold to lawyers, to th' ambitious power,
 Nor lusty Switzer to a lustful whore,
 To gamesters luck, to beauty length of days,
 Nor to a wrinkl'd, wither'd widow, praise,
 Can give such joy, as to behold once more
 An English army on the Gallick shore.
 That this will be, the poets prophesy;
 The poets all were prophets formerly.
 T' inspire 'em then, give ours to night his due;
 His tale is somewhat bloody, but 'tis true.
 A tragick truth shewn to an honest end,
 And can the good or wise of neither sect offend.
 Fancy and stile, far as the rest excel,
 In our deliv'rance-year, let not tongue tell,
 Poets the only curst on whom no manna fell. }
 Plead that they may by Cæsar's influence breathe,
 And mix a laurel with his oaken wreath.
 Then shall his glory flourish to the height,
 Then every pen shall panegyrick write.
 This, this was he, who blest by sacred pow'r, }
 To England its religion did restore,
 So firm, that Rome cou'd never hurt it more. }



P R O L O G U E

To Sir G. Etherege's COMICAL REVENGE; or,
Love in a Tub.

WHO could expect such crouding here to-day,
Meerly on the report of a new play?
A man wou'd think y've been so often bit
By us of late, you should have learn'd more wit;
And first have sent a forlorn hope to spy
The plot and language of our Comedy;
Expecting 'till some desperate criticks had
Resolv'd you, whether it were good or bad.
But yet, we hope you'll never grow so wise;
For if you should, we and our comedies
Must trip to Norwich, or for Ireland go;
And never fix, but, like a puppet-show,
Remove from town to town, from fair to fair,
Seeking fit chapmen to put off our ware.
For such our fortune is, this barren age,
That faction now, not wit, supports the stage:
Wit has, like painting, had her happy flights,
And in peculiar ages reach'd her heights,
Though now declin'd: Yet, could some able pen
Match Fletcher's nature, or the art of Ben,
The old and graver sort would scarce allow
Those plays were good, because we writ them now.
Our author therefore begs you would forget,
Most reverend judges, the records of wit;
And only think upon the modern way
Of writing, whilst y'are censuring his play,

And, gallants, as for you, talk loud i'th' pit,
 Divert yourselves and friends with your own wit;
 Observe the ladies, and neglect the play,
 Or else 'tis fear'd we are undone to-day.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoke by the *Widow*.

SIR Frederick, now I am reveng'd on you;
 For all your frolick wit, y'are couzen'd too:
 I have made over all my wealth to these
 Honest gentlemen; they are my trustees.
 Yet, gentlemen, if you are pleas'd you may
 Supply his wants, and not your trust betray.

Spoke by *Wheadle*.

Poor Wheadle hopes h'as giv'n you all content;
 Here he protests 'tis that he only meant:
 If y'are displeas'd, w'are all cross'd to-day,
 And he has wheedled us that writ the play.
 Like pris'ners conscious of th' offended law,
 When juries after th' evidence withdraw;
 So waits our author between hope and fear,
 Until he does your doubtful verdict hear.
 Men are more civil than in former days;
 Few now in publick hiss or rail at plays;
 He bid me therefore mind your looks with care,
 And told me I should read your sentence there;
 But I, unskill'd in faces, cannot guess
 By this first view what is the play's success;
 Nor shall I ease the author of his fear,
 'Till twice or thrice, at least, I've seen you here.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir G. *Estherege's* MAN of MODE.Written by Sir *Car Scroope*, Baronet.

LIKE dancers on the ropes poor poets fare,
 Most perish young, the rest in danger are;
 This (one would think) should make our authors wary,
 But, gamester like, the giddy fools miscarry.
 A lucky hand or two so tempts 'em on,
 They cannot leave off play till they're undone.
 With modest fears a muse does first begin,
 Like a young wench newly entic'd to sin:
 But tickled once with praise, by her good will,
 The wanton fool would never more lye still.
 'Tis an old mistress you'll meet here to night,
 Whose charms you once have look'd on with delight;
 But now of late such dirty drabs have known ye,
 A muse o'th' better sort's asham'd to own you.
 Nature well drawn, and wit, must now give place
 To gaudy nonsense, and to dull grimace:
 Nor is it strange that you should like so much
 That kind of wit, for most of yours is such.
 But I'm afraid, that while to France we go
 To bring you home fine dresses, dance, and show;
 The stage, like you, will but more foppish grow.
 Of foreign wares why should we fetch the scum,
 When we can be so richly serv'd at home?
 For, heav'n be thank'd 'tis not so wise an age,
 But your own follies may supply the stage.
 Though often plow'd, there's no great fear the soil
 Should barren grow by the too frequent toil;

While at your doors are to be daily found
 Such loads of dunghill to manure the ground.
 'Tis by your follies that we players thrive,
 As the physicians by diseases live.
 And as each year some new distemper reigns,
 Whose friendly poison helps t'increase their gains:
 So among you, there starts up every day,
 Some new unheard-of fool for us to play.
 Then for your own sakes be not too severe,
 Nor what you all admire at home, damn here.
 Since each is fond of his own ugly face,
 Why should you, when we hold it, break the glass?

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Southerne's* ANTHONY LOVE; or, the
 Rambling Lady.

THE ladies have a lonely summer past,
 In hopes kind winter would return at last.
 The seasons change; but heroes are the same,
 A Twelve-month running in pursuit of fame:
 Theirs may be good, but they have spoilt our game.
 Some weak amends this thin town might afford,
 If honest gentlemen would keep their word.
 But your lewd Tunbridge-scandal that was moving,
 Foretold how sad a time would come for loving.
 Sad time indeed, when you begin to write:
 'Tis a shrew'd sign of wanting appetite,
 When you forget yourselves, to think of wit.
 Whilst thus your itch is only to bespatter,
 Your Cupid is transform'd into a satyr:
 Nothing of man about you; all o'er beast;
 Submitting your chief pleasure to your jest.

The time will come (for Ireland falls of course,
 And must send back her conquerors, and ours)
 When each of us, our losses to recover,
 Will mend her fortune in a soldier-lover:
 They'll use us better much than you have done.
 Take us, in passing, like an open town,
 And plunder, do their business, and be gone.
 Or if, at leisure, they lye down to woo,
 They'll rather make us whores, than call us so:
 Not send a whisp'ring libel through the town,
 To blab the favour out, before 'tis done;
 And maul the ladies only in lampoon.
 But if they write in a sententious strain,
 Two lines conclude the travels of their pen;
 One, only to know where, and t'other, when.
 And we can give a lover leave to write,
 When all his bills are to be paid at fight.
 O! would our peaceful days were come again;
 Then I might act it, on and off, a Queen.
 When once the child was turn'd into her teens,
 You could not find a maid behind the scenes.
 But now your keeping humour's out o'door,
 We must die maids, or marry to be poor.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

IF novelty has any charms to move,
 We hope, to night, we've rais'd your drooping love:
 Not to the youngsters of a noisy pit,
 Whose tongues and mistresses out-run their wit:
 But to the graver sinners of the bench,
 Who, from your mothers maids, have lov'd a wench:

Who, cheek by jowl with time, have handed down
 The vices of all ages to your own:
 Here's a variety, that may delight
 The palate of each age's appetite.
 To you I'm sent, you who have dearly known
 The several rates of pleasure in this town;
 And find at last, 'tis worth but your half crown.
 You'll hear with patience a dull scene, to see,
 In a contented lazy waggery,
 The female Montford bare above the knee.
 She makes a mighty noise, like some of you,
 Who often talk of what you never do:
 She's for all womankind, and awes the town,
 As if her husband's breeches were her own.
 She's been to night our hero, though a female,
 Shew me but such a whoremaster, though a male:
 Who through many shifts, is still the same,
 Pursues all petticoats, preserves her fame,
 And though she can do nothing keeps the name.
 Some of your names are up too we suppose,
 Who turn'd of fifty, still would pass for beaux:
 You dance, you dress, you sing, you keep a noise,
 And think you're young, because you herd with boys:
 To such as you there is no mercy owing;
 Your talking must not serve for your not doing.
 And since your feeble failings within doors
 Are known to us, be wise, and even scores,
 Supply our wants, and we'll conceal all yours.
 No matter what you can, or cannot do,
 You shall cheat others still, if we cheat you:
 Keep us but rich, and fine, and we shall find
 Young lovers, always able to be kind.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Southerne's* WIVES EXCUSE; or, Cuckolds
make Themselves.

GALLANTS, you're welcome to our homely cheer,
If you have brought your English stomachs here,
We'll treat you, as the French say, *chere entire*.
And what we want of humour, or of wit,
Make up with your she-neighbours in the pit;
For on the stage, what e'er we do, or say,
The vizard masks can show you better play:
With all our pains, we can but bring 'em in:
'Tis you must take the damsels out again:
And when we've brought you kindly thus together,
'Tis your fault if you're parted by foul weather.
We hope these natural reasons may produce,
In every whoremaster, a kind excuse
For all our faults, the poet's, and the players,
You'll pardon ours, if you can find out theirs. [*To the masters*,
But to the gentler men, who love at sight,
And never care to come to closer fight,
We have provided work for them to night.
With safety they may draw their cannon down,
And into a surrender bomb the town.
From both sides-boxes play their batteries;
And not a bullet shot, but burning eyes:
Those they discharge with such successful arts,
They fire, three deep, into the ladies hearts.
Since each man here finds his diversion,
Let not the damning of our play be one.
But to the ladies who must set it out,
To hear us prate, and see the oglers shoot,

Begging their favour, we have this to say,
In hopes of their protection for the play,
Here is a musick-meeting every day.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

In the Character of Mrs. *Friendall*.

MY character, not being much in vogue,
Has drawn me in to speak the Epilogue:
But, pray conceive me right, not to disparage
That ancient, English perquisite of marriage;
Which, when the priests first made all pleasure sin,
Faster than they could cheat us, drew us in
With rites and liberties of cuckolding.
That us'd to be the custom, and so common,
No girl but wish'd herself a marry'd woman.
Whether I've done my husband right, or no;
Most women may be in the right, that do:
Our Author does not set up for reforming,
Or giving hints to fools who won't take warning:
He's pleas'd, that other people are pleas'd too,
To help to reap that harvest which they sow:
For among all the cuckolds of this town,
Who show themselves, and are as daily shown,
Our poets may make some of 'em their own.
You find in me what may excuse a Wife:
Compare at home the picture with the life,
And most of you may find a Friendall there;
And most of you more justly us'd than here:
Our Author has his ends, if he can show,
The women ne'er want cause for what they do:
For, ladies, all his aim is pleasing you.

Some mettld sparks, who nothing can withstand,
 Your velvet-fortune-hunters, may demand,
 Why, when the means were in the lady's hand,
 The husband civil, and the lover near,
 No more was made of the Wife's character?
 Damn me, cries one, had I been Betterton,
 And struts, and cocks, I know what I'd have done;
 She should not ha' got clear of me so soon.
 You only fear such plays may spoil your game:
 But flesh and frailty always are the same:
 And we shall still proceed in our old way,
 For all that you can do, or poets say.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. Southerne's MAID'S LAST PRAYER.

THEY who must write (for writing's a disease)
 Shou'd make it their whole study how to please:
 And that's a thing our Author fain would do;
 But wiser men, than he, must tell him how:
 For you're so changeable, that every moon,
 Some upstart whimsy knocks the old ones down.
 Sometimes bluff heroes please by dint of arms:
 And sometimes tender nonsense has its charms:
 Now love, and honour strut in buskin'd verse:
 Then, at one leap, you stumble into farce.
 Like true fanaticks, never long content
 With any settled form of government:
 Eager in choice, as eager in forsaking;
 You first blaspheme the gods of your own making.
 Let poets henceforth lay their rules aside;
 And take some ruling planet for their guide;

No more frequent their fam'd Parnassus' tops;
Unless it be to place their telescopes:

For such as hope to merit your esteem,
Must quit their Horace, and erect a scheme.

Thus they may find a way to please the pit,
Provided they insure their plays from wit:

Our author, this way doubtful of success,
(For some men have no stars, as Lilly says)

Himself and play upon the boxes throws,
From perfect beauties, to imperfect beaux.

To you, fair sirs, (for I must call you so
Since art, in spite of nature, makes a beau)

Who in side-box, in seeming judgment sit,
Like barren-tell-clocks to attend the pit;

In all humility he does submit.

Not that he needs to doubt you for his play:

We know your courage lies another way.

Nor will he court you like some servile elves,

Who flatter you as much, as you yourselves:

Let them proclaim the conquests of your looks;

That bug-bear word shall never burn his books.

You, ladies, he adores, and owns your charms,

More powerful, than the greatest monarchs arms.

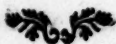
Hopes the kind heav'ns will all your wishes grant,

Whether they be for husband, or gallant:

Nay, Bath, and Wells, at once, if both you want.

Not doubting your good-nature for a man,

Who, to oblige you, does the best he can.



EPILOGUE

To the same.

SEE the effects of a poor Maid's Last Pray'r,
 Driv'n by meer want of husband to despair:
 And ladies, in a barren age as this is,
 'Tis hard for all of us to have our wishes.
 She, for a time pretended to a wit;
 And yet you see her project would not hit:
 Let her example teach you; there's no urging
 These sparks, to take an antiquated virgin:
 They fear the growing cares of marry'd lives,
 And venture — only on their neighbours' wives.
 Be wise in time, set not too great a value
 On your fine selves, and still stand, shall I, shall I.
 For while the dreams of coach and six deceive you,
 The honest squire, despis'd, may chance to leave you:
 And when poor maids are driv'n to petition,
 We seldom find they better their condition:
 Yet thus with some of you it daily happens,
 You lose the beast, in hopes to get the trappings.
 You scorn to stoop below a top gallant;
 And all pretend to ride the elephant:
 As if you had forgot the thing you want. }
 Though each lost hour you pass a fiery trial,
 And ne'er refuse without a self-denial.
 Led by the custom of the sex, you strive
 To blind the world, while you yourselves deceive:
 You may pretend a nice indifference;
 But truth must still be truth, while sense is sense:
 Disguise your inclinations as you can:
 Yet every woman's business is a man.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Southerne's* FATAL MARRIAGE.

WHEN once a poet settles an ill name,
Let him write well, or ill, 'tis all the same:
For criticks now-a-days, like flocks of sheep,
All follow, when the first has made the leap.
And, do you justice, most are well inclin'd
To censure faults you know not how to find:
Some cavil at the stile, and some the actors;
For, right or wrong, we pass for malefactors.
Some well-bred persons carp at the decorum,
As if they bore the drawing-room before 'em.
Sometimes your soft respectful spark discovers,
Our ladies are too coming to their lovers;
For they who still pursue, but ne'er enjoy,
In every case expect a Siege of Troy.
There are some others too who offer battle,
And with their time, and place, maul Aristotle,
Ask what they mean, and after some grimace,
They tell you, twelve's the time; and for the place,
The chocolate-house, at the looking-glass.
To please such judges, some have tir'd their brains,
And almost had their labours for their pains:
After a twelve-month vainly spent in plotting,
These mettled criticks cry 'tis good for nothing;
But wiser authors turn their plots upon you,
And plot to purpose when they get your money.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

NOW tell me, when you saw the Lady die,
 Were you not puzzled for a reason why?
 A buxom damsel, and of play-house race,
 Not to out-live th' enjoyment of a brace:
 Were that the only marriage-curse in store,
 How many would compound to suffer more,
 And yet live on, with comfort, to threescore?
 But on our exits there is no relying:
 We women are so whimsical in dying.
 Some pine away for loss of ogling fellows:
 Nay some have dy'd for love, as stories tell us.
 Some, say our histories, though long ago,
 For having undergone a rape, or so,
 Plung'd the fell dagger, without more ado.
 But time has laugh'd those follies out of fashion:
 And sure they'll never gain the approbation
 Of ladies, who consult their reputation.
 For if a rape must be esteem'd a curse,
 Grim death, and publication make it worse.
 Should the opinion of the world be try'd,
 They'll scarce give judgment on the plaintiff's side,
 For all must own, 'tis most egregious nonsense,
 To die for being pleas'd, with a safe conscience.
 Nay, look not on your fans, nor turn away,
 For tell me, ladies, why do you marry, pray?
 But to enjoy your wishes, as you may.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Southerne's* OROONOKO; or, The Royal Slave.

AS when in hostile times two neighbouring states
Strive by themselves, and their confederates;
The war at first is made with awkward skill,
And soldiers clumsily each other kill,
'Till time at length their untaught fury tames,
And into rules their heedless rage reclaims:
Then every science by degrees is made
Subservient to the man-destroying trade:
Wit, wisdom, reading, observation, art;
A well-turn'd head to guide a generous heart.
So it may prove with our contending stages,
If you will kindly but supply their wages:
Which you with ease may furnish, by retrenching
Your superfluities of wine and wenching.
Who'd grudge to spare from riot and hard drinking,
To lay it out on means to mend his thinking?
To follow such advice you should have leisure,
Since what refines your sense, refines your pleasure:
Women grown tame by use each fool can get,
But cuckolds all are made by men of wit.
To virgin favours fools have no pretence:
For maidenheads were made for men of sense.
'Tis not enough to have a horse well bred,
To shew his mettle, he must be well fed:
Nor is it all in provender and breed,
He must be try'd and strain'd, to mend his speed:
A favour'd poet, like a pamper'd horse,
Will strain his eye-balls out to win the course.

Do you but in your wisdoms vote it fit
 To yield due succours to this war of wit,
 The buskin with more grace shall tread the stage,
 Love sigh in softer strains, heroes less rage :
 Satyr shall shew a triple row of teeth,
 And Comedy shall laugh your fops to death :
 Wit shall refine, and Pegasus shall foam,
 And soar in search of ancient Greece and Rome.
 And since the nation's in the conquering fit,
 As you by arms, we'll vanquish France in wit :
 'The work were over, cou'd our poets write
 With half the spirit that our soldiers fight.

E P I L O G U E

To the same. By Mr. Congreve.

YOU see we try all shapes, and shifts, and arts,
 To tempt your favours, and regain your hearts.
 We weep, and laugh, join mirth and grief together,
 Like rain and sunshine mixt, in April weather.
 Your different tastes divide our poet's cares :
 One foots the sock, t'other the buskin wears :
 Thus while he strives to please, he's forc'd to do't,
 Like Volscius, hip-hop, in a single boot.
 Criticks, he knows, for this may damn his books :
 But he makes feasts for friends, and not for cooks.
 Though errant-knight of late no favour find,
 Sure you will be to ladies-errant kind.
 To follow fame, knights-errant make profession :
 We damsels fly, to save our reputation :
 So they, their valour shew, we our discretion.

To lands of monsters, and fierce beasts, they go :
 We, to those islands, where rich husbands grow :
 Tho' they're no monsters, we may make 'em so. }
 If they're of English growth, they'll bear't with patience :
 But save us from a spouse of Oroonoko's nations !
 Then blest your stars, you happy London wives,
 Who love at large, each day, yet keep your lives ;
 Nor envy poor Imoinda's doating blindness,
 Who thought her husband kill'd her out of kindness.
 Death with a husband ne'er had shewn such charms,
 Had she once dy'd within a lover's arms.
 Her error was from ignorance proceeding :
 Poor soul ! she wanted some of our town-breeding.
 Forgive this Indian's fondness of her spouse ;
 Their law no christian liberty allows : }
 Alas ! they make a conscience of their vows !
 If virtue in a heathen be a fault,
 Then d—n the heathen-school, where she was taught.
 She might have learn'd to cuckold, jilt, and sham,
 Had Covent-Garden been in Surinam.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. T. Southerne's FATE of CAPUA.

Written by the Honourable *Charles Boyle*, Esquire.

OUR bard resolv'd to quit this wicked town,
 And all poetick offices lay down :
 But the weak brother was drawn in again,
 And a cast mistress tempted him to sin.
 Thus many a cautious gallant in this throng,
 May wed, when old, whom he debauch'd when young.

Thus the repenting fair ones vow in vain
From cards, from love, from scandal to refrain;
For, Easter over, they relapse again. }
To write well's hard : But I appeal to y' all,
Is't not much harder not to write at all ?
Some men must write, for writing's their disease,
And every poet's sure one man to please.
Some meddling coxcombs rather than sit still,
And perfectly do nothing, must do ill.
Some are with busy dulness so o'er-run,
They seem design'd by heav'n to tease the town.
Yet when these fools have spawn'd some sickly play,
We have so many greater fools than they, }
They'll pack a crouded audience the third day.
This poet has no fly inveigling arts :
He'll try to gain, but he'll not steal your hearts.
His muse is rustick, and perhaps too plain,
The men of squeamish tastes to entertain :
Who none but dutchesses will deign to toast,
And favours only from front boxes boast.
That's all grimace : When appetites are good, }
Be the drefs coarse, the air and manners rude,
You can take up with wholesome flesh and blood.
But he despairs of pleasing all the nation,
'Tis so debauch'd with whims of reformation,
H'has done his best : Here is no wanton scene
To give the wicked joy, the godly, spleen.
Not one poor bawdy jest shall dare appear ; }
For now the batter'd veteran strumpets, here
Pretend at least to bring a modest ear.
Here is some love, 'tis true, some noise, some war,
Enough to please the Belles, the Beaux to scare.
Some bustling patriots too, some rabble-rout,
And Senators of the weak side thrown out.

But in all this here's nothing can offend,
 Nothing to lose one ancient midnight friend :
 He hopes then, when his cause comes on, they'll all attend.
 Let critick foes remember 'tis past Lent,
 And all good christian curses then were spent.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Written by Colonel Codrington.

POETS fine titles for themselves may find,
 I think 'em the fool-mongers of mankind.
 The charitable quacks indeed pretend,
 They trade in fools, only those fools to mend.
 Yet they wou'd scarce the nauseous task endure,
 But that, like Bedlam-doctors, they are sure
 To get, by showing fools they cannot cure.
 Equal in this, all plays must be confest ;
 Fool is the fav'rite dish of the whole feast.
 In Farce, the wit's a fool, or fool's a wit.
 In Comedy the beau pretends a right.
 But tragick writers still agree to plot
 The greatestst heroe, for the greatestst sot.
 Our bard t' indulge your taste with vast delight,
 Serv'd up a senate full of fools to night :
 Some bused hard for Hannibal, and some
 Wou'd venture all the brains they had for Rome.
 Thus fighting fools support ambitious knaves :
 Whoe'er prevail'd, the Capuans still were slaves.
 Our pair of friends shine far above the rest,
 With double share of fool and heroe blest.

Our lover wou'd not tempt the lady's honour ;
 Yet had he boldly push'd, and fairly won her,
 You'll all allow, he wou'd less harm have done her. }
 Joys well contriv'd are had at easier price.
 Thank heav'n, our British friends are not so nice.
 Our most important fool is still behind !
 The man was marry'd, firs, and sick in mind.
 'Twas a meer whim of honour cost his life.
 The squeamish Capuan wou'd not share his wife.
 Why wives are wives ; And he that will be billing,
 Must not think cuckoldom deserves a killing.
 What if the gentle creature had been kissing,
 Nothing the good man marry'd for, was missing.
 Besides, the rights of ladies sacred are :
 He shou'd have been content with neighbours fare.
 But she, by her coy gallant's crime, was good,
 And was not won, because she was not woo'd.
 Had he the secret of his birth-right known,
 'Tis odds the faithful annals wou'd have shown, }
 The wives of half this race, more lucky than his own.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *T. Southerne's* SPARTAN DAME.

Written by Mr. *Fenton.*

WHEN realms are ravag'd with invasive foes,
 Each bosom with heroick ardor glows ;
 Old chiefs, reflecting on their former deeds,
 Disdain to rust with batter'd invalids ;
 But active in the foremost ranks appear,
 And leave young smock-fac'd beaux to guard the rear.

So, to repel the Vandals of the stage,
Our vet'ran bard resumes his tragic rage :
He throws the gauntlet Otway us'd to wield,
And calls for Englishmen to judge the field :
Thus arm'd to rescue nature from disgrace,
Messieurs ! lay down your minstrells, and grimace :
The brawnifest youths of Troy the combat fear'd,
When old Entellus in the lists appear'd.
Yet what avails the champion's giant size,
When Pigmies are made umpires of the prize ?
Your fathers (men of sense, and honest bowlers)
Disdain'd the mummery of foreign strollers :
By their examples wou'd you form your taste,
The present age might emulate the past.
We hop'd that art and genius had secur'd you ;
But soon facetious Harlequin allur'd you :
The muses blush'd to see their friends exalting,
Those elegant delights of jig, and vaulting :
So charm'd you were, you ceas'd awhile to doat
On nonsense, gargled in an Eunuch's throat.
All pleas'd to hear the chatt'ring monsters speak,
As old wives wonder at the parson's greek.
Such light ragouts and mushrooms may be good,
To whet your appetites for wholesome food :
But the bold Briton ne'er in earnest dines
Without substantial haunches and surloins.
In wit, as well as war, they give us vigour ;
Cressy was lost by kickshaws and soup-meagre.
Instead of light deserts, and luscious froth,
Our poet treats to-night with Spartan-broth ;
To which, as well as all his former feasts,
The ladies are the chief-invited guests.
Crown'd with a kind of Glassenbury bays,
That bloom amid the winter of his days.

He comes, ambitious in his green decline,
 To consecrate his wreath at beauty's shrine.
 His Oroonoko never fail'd t' engage
 The radiant circles of the former age :
 Each bosom heav'd, all eyes were seen to flow,
 And sympathize with Isabella's woe :
 But fate reserv'd, to crown his elder fame,
 The brightest audience for the Spartan Dame.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

Written by Major *Richardson Pack*.

O U R author's muse a numerous issue boasts,
 And many of the daughters have been toasts.
 She who now last appears upon the stage,
 (The hopes and joy of his declining age)
 With modest fears, a cens'ring world to shun,
 Retir'd awhile, and liv'd conceal'd a Nun.
 At length, releas'd from that restraint, the dame
 Trusts to the town her fortune, and her fame.
 Absence, and time, have lost her many friends,
 But this bright circle makes her large amends.
 To you, fair judges, she submits her cause ;
 Nor doubts, if you approve, the mens applause.
 Some sullen formal rogue perhaps may lour,
 (Rebel to female, as to royal pow'r)
 But all the gay, the gallant, and the great,
 On beauty's standard with ambition wait.
 Glory is vain, where love has had no part :
 The post 'of honour is a woman's heart.

Ev'n chains are ornaments, that you bestow;
 The more your slaves, the prouder still we grow.
 Man, a rough creature, savage form'd and rude,
 By you to gentler manners is subdu'd:
 In the sweet habitude we grow refin'd,
 And polish strength with elegance of mind.
 Our sex may represent the bolder pow'rs;
 The graces, muses, and the virtues, yours.

But ah! 'tis pity, that for want of care,
 Madmen and fops your bounty sometimes share,
 Wretches in wit's despight and nature's born,
 Beneath your favour, nay, below your scorn.
 May poor Celona's wrongs a warning prove,
 And teach the fair with dignity to love.
 Let wealth ne'er tempt you to abandon sense,
 Nor knaves seduce you with their grave pretence.
 Be vile profaneness ever in disgrace,
 And vice abhor'd, as treacherous, and base.
 Revere yourselves; and, conscious of your charms,
 Receive no demon to an angel's arms.
 Success can then alone your vows attend,
 When worth's the motive, constancy the end.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Congreve's* OLD BATCHELOR.

HOW this vile world is chang'd! In former days,
 Prologues were serious speeches, before Plays;
 Grave solemn things, as graces are to feasts;
 Where poets begg'd a blessing from their guests.
 But now, no more like Suppliants we come,
 A Play makes war, and Prologue is the drum.

Arm'd with keen satire, and with pointed wit,
 We threaten you who do for judges sit,
 To save our Plays, or else we'll damn your Pit.
 But for your comfort it falls out to-day,
 We've a young author, and his first-born play;
 So, standing only on his good behaviour,
 He's very civil and intreats your favour.
 Not but the man has malice, wou'd he show it,
 But on my conscience he's a bashful poet;
 You think that strange—no matter, he'll outgrow it.
 Well, I'm his advocate—by me he prays you,
 (I don't know whether I shall speak to please you)
 He prays—O bless me! what shall I do now!
 Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!
 And 'twas the prettiest Prologue as he wrote it!
 Well, the deuce take me, if I han't forgot it.
 O Lord, for heaven's sake excuse the play,
 Because, you know, if it be damn'd to-day,
 I shall be hang'd for wanting what to say.
 For my sake then—but I'm in such confusion,
 I cannot stay to hear your resolution.

[Runs off.]

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

AS a rash girl who will all hazards run,
 And be enjo,'d, though sure to be undone;
 Soon as her curiosity is over,
 Would give the world she could her toy recover:
 So fares it with our poet; and I'm sent
 To tell you, he already does repent:
 Would you were all as forward to keep Lent.

Now the deed's done, the giddy-thing has leisure
 To think o'th' the sting, that's in the tail of pleasure.
 Methinks I hear him in consideration !

What will the world say ? where's my reputation ?
 Now that's at stake——No, fool, 'tis out o'fashion.
 If loss of that should follow want of wit,
 How many undone men were in the Pit !

Why that's some comfort to an Author's fears,
 If he's an Afs, he will be tried by's Peers.

But hold——I am exceeding my commission ;
 My business here, was humbly to petition :
 But we're so us'd to rail on these occasions,
 I could not help one trial of your patience :
 For 'tis our way (you know) for fear o'th' the worst,
 To be before-hand still, and cry fool first.
 How say you, Sparks ? How do you stand affected ?
 I swear young Bays within is so dejected,
 'Twou'd grieve your hearts to see him ; shall I call him ?
 But then you cruel critics would so maul him !
 Yet, may be, you'll encourage a beginner ;
 But how ?——Just as the devil does a sinner.
 Women and wits are us'd e'en much at one,
 You gain your ends, and damn 'em when you've done.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Congreve's* DOUBLE DEALER.

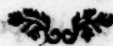
MOOORS have this way (as story tells) to know
 Whether their brats are truly got, or no ;
 Into the sea the new-born babe is thrown,
 There, as instinct directs, to swim, or drown.
 A barbarous device, to try if spouse
 Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials, Poets make of Plays :
 Only they trust to more inconstant seas ;
 So does our Author, this his Child commit
 To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,
 To know if it be truly born a Wit.

Critics avaunt ; for you are fish of prey,
 And feed, like sharks, upon an infant Play.
 Be ev'ry monster of the deep away ;
 Let's a fair trial have, and a clear sea.

Let nature work, and do not damn too soon,
 For life will struggle long, ere it sink down :
 And will at least rise thrice, before it drown.
 Let us consider, had it been our fate,
 Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate !
 I will not say, we'd all in danger been,
 Were each to suffer for his mother's sin :
 But by my troth I cannot avoid thinking,
 How nearly some good men might have 'scap'd sinking.
 But, Heav'n be prais'd, this custom is confin'd
 Alone to th' offspring of the Muses kind :
 Our christian cuckolds are more bent to pity ;
 I know not one Moor-husband in the city.
 I'th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,
 For he thinks all his own, that is his wife's.

Whatever fate is for this Play design'd,
 The Poet's sure he shall some comfort find :
 For if his muse has play'd him false, the worst
 That can befall him, is, to be divorc'd ;
 You husbands judge, if that be to be curs'd.



EPILOGUE

To the same.

COU'D Poets but foresee how Plays wou'd take,
 Then they cou'd tell what Epilogues to make ;
 Whether to thank or blame their audience most :
 But that late knowledge does much hazard cost :
 'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost.
 So 'till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know
 Whether he shall escape the law, or no.
 But Poets run much greater hazards far,
 Than they who stand their trials at the bar ;
 The law provides a curb for its own fury,
 And suffers judges to direct the jury.
 But in this court, what diff'rence does appear !
 For every one's both judge and jury here ;
 Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.
 All have a right and title to some part,
 Each choosing that in which he has most art.
 The dreadful men of learning all confound,
 Unless the fable's good, and moral found.
 The vizor-masks that are in Pit and Gallery,
 Approve, or damn, the Repartee and Rallery.
 The lady critics, who are better read,
 Enquire if characters are nicely bred ;
 If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace :
 They judge of action too, and time, and place ;
 In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,
 For that's a kind of Affignation Learning.
 Beaux judge of dress ; the wittlings judge of songs ;
 The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.

Poor poets thus the favour are deny'd,
 Even to make exceptions when they're try'd.
 'Tis hard that they must ev'ry one admit :
 Methinks I see some faces in the Pit,
 Which must of consequence be foes to wit.
 You who can judge, to sentence may proceed ;
 But tho' he cannot write, let him be freed
 At least from their contempt, who cannot read.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Congreve's* LOVE for LOVE.

Spoken at the Opening of the New-House.

THE husbandman in vain renews his toil,
 To cultivate each year a hungry soil ;
 And fondly hopes for rich and generous fruit,
 When what shou'd feed the tree, devours the root :
 Th' unladen boughs, he sees, bode certain dearth,
 Unless transplanted to more kindly earth.
 So, the poor husbands of the stage, who found
 Their labours lost upon ungrateful ground,
 This last and only remedy have prov'd ;
 And hope new fruit from ancient stocks remov'd.
 Well may they hope, when you so kindly aid,
 Well plant a soil which you so rich have made.
 As nature gave the world to man's first age,
 So from your bounty, we receive this stage ;
 The freedom man was born to you've restor'd,
 And to our world such plenty you afford,
 It seems like Eden, fruitful of it's own accord.
 But since in Paradise frail flesh gave way,
 And when but two were made, both went astray ;

Forbear your wonder, and the fault forgive,
 If in our larger family we grieve,
 One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.
 We who remain, would gratefully repay,
 What our endeavours can, and bring this day
 The first-fruit offering of a virgin Play.
 We hope there's something that may please each taste,
 And tho' of homely fare we make the feast,
 Yet you will find variety at least.
 There's Humour which for chearful friends we got,
 And for the thinking party there's a Plot.
 We've something too, to gratify ill nature,
 (If there be any here) and that is Satire.
 Tho' satire scarce dares grin, 'tis grown so mild,
 Or only shews its teeth, as if it smil'd.
 As asses thistles, poets mumble wit,
 And dare not bite, for fear of being bit.
 They hold their pens, as swords are held by fools,
 And are afraid to use their own edge-tools.
 Since the Plain-Dealer's scenes of manly rage,
 Not one has dar'd to lash this crying age.
 This time, the poet owns the bold essay,
 Yet hopes there's no ill-manners in his play :
 And he declares by me, he has design'd
 Affront to none, but frankly speaks his mind.
 And shou'd th' ensuing scenes not chance to hit,
 He offers but this one excuse,——'twas writ
 Before your late encouragement of wit.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

SURE providence at first design'd this place
To be the player's refuge in distress ;
For still in every storm, they all run hither,
As to a shed, that shields 'em from the weather.
But thinking of this change which last befell us,
It's like what I have heard our poets tell us :
For when behind our scenes their suits are pleading,
To help their love, sometimes they shew their reading ;
And wanting ready cash to pay for hearts,
They top their learning on us, and their parts.
Once of philosophers they told us stories,
Whom, as I think, they call'd—Py—Pythagories,
I'm sure 'tis some such Latin name they give 'em,
And we, who know no better, must believe 'em.
Now to these men (say they) such souls were giv'n,
That after death, ne'er went to hell, nor heav'n,
But liv'd, I know not how, in beasts ; and then
When many years were past, in men again.
Methinks we Players resemble such a soul !
That does from bodies, we from houses strole.
Thus Aristotle's soul, of old that was,
May now be damn'd to animate an Ass ;
Or in this very house, for ought we know,
Is doing painful penance in some Beau :
And thus, our audience, which did once resort
To shining theatres to see our sport,
Now find us toss'd into a Tennis-court.
These walls but t'other day were fill'd with noise,
Of roaring gamesters, and your Damme Boys ;

Then bounding balls and rackets they encompass,
And new they're fill'd with jests, and flights, and bombast!

I vow, I don't much like this transmigration,
Strolling from place to place, by circulation;
Grant heav'n we don't return to our first station.

I know not what these think, but for my part,
I can't reflect without an aking heart,
How we should end in our original, a cart.

But we can't fear, since you're so good to save us,
That you have only set us up, to leave us.
Thus from the past, we hope for future grace,
I beg it —

And some here know I have a begging face.

Then pray continue this your kind behaviour,
For a clear stage won't do, without your favour.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Congreve's* MOURNING BRIDE.

THE time has been when Plays were not so plenty,
And a less number new would well content ye.

New plays did then like Almanacks appear;
And one was thought sufficient for a year:
Tho' they are more like Almanacks of late;
For in one year, I think, they're out of date.
Nor were they without reason join'd together;
For just as one prognosticates the weather,
How plentiful the crop, or scarce the grain,
What peals of thunder, and what show'rs of rain:
So t'other can foretell, by certain rules,
What crops of coxcombs, or what floods of fools.
In such like prophecies were poets skill'd,
Which now they find in their own tribe fulfill'd:

The dearth of wit they did so long preface,
 Is fall'n on us, and almost starves the Stage.
 Were you not griev'd, as often as you saw
 Poor actors thrash such empty sheafs of straw?
 Toiling and lab'ring at their lungs expence,
 To start a jest, or force a little sense.
 Hard fate for us! still harder in th' event;
 Our authors sin, but we alone repent.
 Still they proceed, and, at our charge, write worse;
 'Twere some amends if they could reimburse:
 But there's the devil, tho' their cause is lost,
 There's no recovering damages or cost.
 Good wits, forgive this liberty we take,
 Since custom gives the losers leave to speak.
 But if, provok'd, your dreadful wrath remains,
 Take you revenge upon the coming Scenes:
 For that damn'd Poet's spar'd who damns a brother,
 As one thief 'scapes that executes another.
 Thus far alone does to the wits relate;
 But from the rest we hope a better fate.
 To please and move has been our Poet's theme,
 Art may direct, but nature is his aim;
 And, nature miss'd, in vain he boasts his art,
 For only nature can affect the heart.
 Then freely judge the Scenes that shall ensue,
 But as with freedom, judge with candour too.
 He wou'd not lose, thro' prejudice, his cause;
 Nor wou'd obtain precariously applause.
 Impartial censure he requests from all,
 Prepar'd by just decrees to stand or fall.



EPILOGUE

To the same.

THE Tragedy thus done, I am, you know,
No more a Princess, but in *statu quo* :
And now as unconcern'd this mourning wear,
As if indeed a widow, or an heir.
I've leisure, now, to mark your sev'ral faces,
And know each Critic by his four grimaces.
To poison plays, I see them where they sit,
Scatter'd, like rats-bane, up and down the pit ;
While others watch like parish searchers, hir'd
To tell of what disease the Play expir'd.
O with what joy they run, to spread the news
Of a damn'd Poet, and departed Muse !
But if he 'scape, with what regret they're seiz'd !
And how they're disappointed when they're pleas'd !
Critics to Plays for the same end resort,
That surgeons wait on trials in a court ;
For innocence condemn'd they've no respect,
Provided they've a body to dissect.
As Suffex men that dwell upon the shore,
Look out when storms arise, and billows roar,
Devoutly praying, with uplifted hands,
That some well-laden ship may strike the sands ;
To whose rich cargo they may make pretence,
And fatten on the spoils of providence :
So Critics throng to see a new Play split,
And thrive and prosper on the wrecks of wit.
Small hope our Poet from these prospects draws ;
And therefore to the Fair commends his cause..

Your tender hearts to mercy are inclin'd,
 With whom, he hopes, this Play will favour find,
 Which was an off'ring to the sex design'd.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Congreve's* WAY of the WORLD.

OF those few fools, who with ill stars are curst,
 Sure scribbling fools, call'd Poets, fare the worst:
 For they're a sort of fools which Fortune makes,
 And after she has made them fools, forsakes.
 With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent case,
 For Fortune favours all her Idiot Race:
 In the jay's nest the Cuckow Eggs we find,
 O'er which she broods to hatch the Changeling-Kind.
 No portion for her own she has to spare,
 So much she dotes on her adopted care.

Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
 Suffer'd at first some trifling stakes to win:
 But what unequal hazards do they run!
 Each time they write they venture all they've won:
 The squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone.
 This Author, heretofore, has found your favour,
 But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.
 To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
 Shou'd grants to Poets made, admit resumption:
 And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
 If that be found a forfeited estate.

He owns, with toil, he wrought the following scenes,
 But if they're naught ne'er spare him for his pains:
 Damn him the more; have no commiseration
 For dulness on mature deliberation.

He swears he'll not resent one his'd-off scene,
 Nor, like those peevish wits, his Play maintain,
 Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
 Some plot we think he has, and some new thought;
 Some humour too, no farce; but that's a fault.
 Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
 For so reform'd a town who dares correct?
 To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
 He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.
 Shou'd he by chance a knave or fool expose,
 That hurts none here; sure here are none of those.
 In short, our Play shall (with your leave to shew it)
 Give you one instance of a passive Poet,
 Who to your judgments yields all resignation;
 So save or damn, after your own discretion.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

AFTER our Epilogue this croud dismisses,
 I'm thinking how this Play'll be pull'd to pieces.
 But pray consider, ere you doom its fall,
 How hard a thing 'twou'd be, to please you all.
 There are some Criticks so with spleen diseas'd,
 They scarcely come inclining to be pleas'd:
 And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
 Who pleases any one against his will.
 Then all bad Poets we are sure are foes,
 And how their number's swell'd the town well knows.
 In shoals, I've mark'd 'em judging in the Pit;
 Tho' they're on no pretence for judgment fit,
 But that they have been damn'd for want of wit.

Since when, they by their own offences taught,
 Set up for spies on Plays, and finding fault.
 Others there are whose malice we'd prevent ;
 Such, who watch Plays with scurrilous intent,
 To mark out who by Characters are meant.
 And tho' no perfect likeness they can trace,
 Yet each pretends to know the copy'd face.
 These with false glosses feed their own ill-nature,
 And turn to Libel, what was meant a Satire.
 May such malicious Fops this fortune find,
 To think themselves alone the Fools design'd :
 If any are so arrogantly vain,
 To think they singly can support a Scene,
 And furnish Fool enough to entertain.
 For well the learn'd and the judicious know,
 That Satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,
 As any one abstracted Fop to show.
 For, as when painters form a matchless face,
 They from each Fair-one catch some diff'rent grace ;
 And shining features in one portrait blend,
 To which no single beauty must pretend :
 So Poets oft do in one Piece expose
 Whole Belles Assemblées of Coquettes and Beaux.

P R O L O G U E by Mr. Congreve,
 To QUEEN MARY,

Upon her Majesty's coming to see the OLD BATCHELOR,
 after having seen the DOUBLE DEALER.

BY this repeated act of grace, we see
 Wit is again the care of Majesty ;
 And while thus honour'd our proud Stage appears,
 We seem to rival Ancient Theatres.

Thus flourish'd wit in our forefathers' age,
And thus the Roman and Athenian Stage.

Whose Wit is best, we'll not presume to tell ;
But this we know, our Audience will excel :
For never was in Rome, nor Athens, seen
So fair a circle, and so bright a Queen.

Long has the Muses' land been over-cast,
And many rough and stormy winters past ;
Hid from the world, and thrown in shades of night,
Of heat depriv'd, and almost void of light :
While Wit, a hardy plant, of nature bold,
Has struggled strongly with the killing cold :
So does it still through opposition grow,
As if its root was warmer kept by snow :
But when shot forth, then draws the danger near,
On ev'ry side the gath'ring winds appear,
And blasts destroy the fruit, which frosts wou'd spare.
But now, new vigour and new life it knows,
And warmth that from this Royal Presence flows.

O wou'd she shine with rays more frequent here !
How gay wou'd, then, this drooping land appear !
Then, like the sun, with pleasure she might view
The smiling earth, cloth'd by her beams anew.
O'er all the meads, shou'd various flowers be seen
Mix'd with the the laurel's never-fading green,
The new creation of a Gracious Queen.



E P I L O G U E

At the Opening of the QUEEN'S THEATRE in the Hay-market, with an Italian Pastoral.

Written by Mr. Congreve.

Whatever future fate our house may find,
At present we expect you shou'd be kind :
Inconstancy itself can claim no right,
Before enjoyment and the wedding night.
You must be fix'd a little ere you range,
You must be true 'till you have time to change.
A week at least ; one night is sure too soon :
But we pretend not to a honey-moon.
'To novelty we know you can be true,
But what, alas ! or who, is always new ?

This day, without presumption, we pretend
With novelty entire you're entertain'd ;
For not alone our House and Scenes are new,
Our Song and Dance, but ev'n our Actors too.
Our Play itself has something in't uncommon,
Two faithful lovers, and one constant woman.
In sweet Italian strains our shepherds sing,
Of harmless loves our painted forests ring, }
In notes, perhaps less foreign than the thing.
To sound and shew at first we make pretence, }
In time we may regale you with some sense,
But that, at present, were too great expence.
We only for the beaux may think it hard,
To be to-night from smutty jests debarr'd :
But in good breeding, sure, they'll once excuse
Ev'n modesty, when in a Stranger muse,

The day's at hand, when we shall shift the scene,
 And to yourselves shew your dear selves again.
 Paint the reverse of what you've seen to-day,
 And in bold strokes the vicious town display.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Hopkins's* PYRRHUS King of EPIRUS.

Written by Mr. *Congreve*.

OUR age has much improv'd the warrior's art ;
 For fighting, now, is thought the weakest part ;
 And a good head more useful than a heart. }
 This way of war, does our example yield ;
 That stage will win, which longest keeps the field.
 We mean not battle, when we bid defiance ;
 But starving one another to compliance.
 Our troops encamp'd are by each other view'd,
 And those which first are hungry, are subdu'd.
 And there, in truth, depends the great decision :
 They conquer, who cut off the foe's provision.
 Let fools, with knocks and bruises, keep a pother ;
 Our war and trade, is to out-wit each other.
 But hold : Will not the politicians tell us,
 That both our conduct, and our foresight fail us,
 To raise recruits, and draw new forces down,
 Thus, in the dead vacation of the town ?
 To muster up our rhimes, without our reason,
 And forage for an audience out of season ?
 Our Author's fears must this false step excuse ;
 'Tis the first flight of a just-feather'd muse :
 Th' occasion ta'en, when critics are away ;
 Half wits and beaux, those rav'nous birds of prey.

But, Heav'n be prais'd, far hence they vent their wrath,
 Mauling, in mild lampoon, th' intriguing Bath.
 Thus does our Author his first flight commence;
 Thus, against friends at first, with foils we fence:
 Thus prudent Gimcrack try'd if he were able
 (Ere he'd wet foot) to swim upon a table.

Then spare the youth: or if you'll damn the play,
 Let him but first have his; then take your day.

P R O L O G U E

To the COURT,

On the QUEEN's Birth-Day, 1704.

Written by Mr. Congreve.

THE happy muse, to this high scene preferr'd,
 Hereafter shall in loftier strains be heard;
 And soaring to transcend her usual theme,
 Shall sing of virtue and heroic fame.
 No longer shall she toil upon the stage,
 And fruitless war with vice and folly wage;
 No more in mean disguise she shall appear,
 And shapes she wou'd reform be forc'd to wear:
 While ignorance and malice join to blame,
 And break the mirror that reflects their shame.
 Henceforth she shall pursue a nobler task,
 Shew her bright virgin face, and scorn the Satyr's mask.
 Happy her future days! which are design'd
 Alone to paint the beauties of the mind.
 By just originals to draw with care,
 And copy from the court a faultless fair:

Such labours with success her hopes may crown,
And shame to manners an incorrigible town.

While this design her eager thought pursues,
Such various virtues all around she views,
She knows not where to fix, or which to chuse.
Yet still ambitious of the daring flight,
ONE only awes her with superior light.
From that attempt the conscious muse retires,
Nor to inimitable worth aspires;
But secretly applauds, and silently admires.

Hence she reflects upon the genial ray
That first enliven'd this auspicious day:
On that bright star, to whose indulgent pow'r
We owe the blessings of the present hour.
Concurring omens of propitious fate
Bore, with one sacred birth, an equal date:
Whence we derive whatever we possess,
By foreign conquest, or domestic peace.

Then, Britain, then thy dawn of bliss begun:
Then broke the morn that lighted up this sun!
Then was it doom'd whose councils should succeed;
And by whose arm the christian world be freed;
Then the fierce foe was pre-ordain'd to yield,
And then the battle won at Blenheim's glorious field.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. Dryden junior's HUSBAND HIS OWN CUCKOLD.

Written by Mr. CONGREVE.

THIS year has been remarkable two ways,
For blooming Poets, and for blasted Plays.
We've been by much appearing plenty mock'd,
At once both tantaliz'd, and over-stock'd.

Our Authors too, by their success of late,
 Begin to think Third Days are out of date.
 What can the cause be, that our plays won't keep,
 Unless they have a rot some years, like sheep?
 For our parts, we confess we're quite ashamed
 To read such weekly bills of Poets damn'd.
 Each parish knows 'tis but a mournful case
 When christenings fall, and funerals increase.
 Thus 'tis, and thus 'twill be when we are dead,
 There will be writers which will ne'er be read.
 Why will you be such wits, and write such things?
 You're willing to be wasps, but want the stings.
 Let not your spleen provoke you to that height,
 'Od life you don't know what you do, sirs, when you write.
 You'll find that Pegasus has tricks, when try'd,
 Tho' you make nothing on't but up and ride;
 Ladies and all, i'faith, now get astride.
 Contriving characters, and scenes, and plots,
 Is grown as common now, as knitting knots;
 With the same ease, and negligence of thought,
 The charming play is writ, and fringe is wrought.
 Tho' this be frightful, yet we're more afraid,
 When Ladies leave, that Beaus will take the trade:
 Thus far 'tis well enough, if here 'twould stop,
 But shou'd they write, we must e'en shut up shop.
 How shall we make this mode of writing sink?
 A mode, said I? 'Tis a disease I think,
 A stubborn tetter that's not cur'd with ink.
 For still it spreads, 'till each th' infection takes,
 And seizes ten for one that it forsakes.
 Our Play to-day is sprung from none of these,
 Nor should you damn it, tho' it does not please,
 Since born without the bounds of your four seas.
 For if you grant no favour as 'tis new,
 Yet as a stranger, there is something due:

From Rome (to try its fate) this play was sent ;
 Start not at Rome, for there's no Popery meant ;
 Tho' there the Poet may his dwelling chuse,
 Yet still he knows his Country claims his Muse.
 Hither an offering his first-born he sends,
 Whose good or ill success on you depends.
 Yet he has hope some kindness may be shown,
 As due to greater merit than his own,
 And begs the Sire may for the Son atone.
 There's his last refuge, if the Play don't take,
 Yet spare young Dryden for his father's sake.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. Otway's ALCIBIADES.

NEVER did rhymers greater hazard run,
 'Mongst us by your severity undone :
 Tho' we, alas ! t' oblige you have done most,
 And bought you pleasures at your own sad cost :
 Yet all our best endeavours have been lost.
 So oft a statesman lab'ring to be good,
 His honesty's for treason understood :
 Whilst some false flatt'ring minion of the court,
 Shall play the traitor, and be honour'd for't.
 To you known judges of what's sense and wit,
 Our author swears he gladly will submit :
 But there's a sort of things infect the pit,
 That will be witty spite of nature too,
 And to be thought so, haunt and pester you.
 Hither sometimes those would-be-wits repair,
 In quest of you ; where if you not appear,
 Cries out—Pugh ! damn-me what do we do here ?

Strait up he starts, his garniture then puts
 In order, fo' he cocks; and out he struts
 To th' coffee-house, where he about him looks;
 Spies friend, cries Jack—I've been to night at th' Dukes;
 They, silly rogues, are all undone, my dear,
 I gad! not one of sense that I saw there.
 Thus to himself he'd reputation gather
 Of wit, and good acquaintance, but has neither.
 Wit has indeed a stranger been of late,
 'Mongst its pretenders nought so strange as that.
 Both houses too too long a fast have known,
 That coarsest nonsense goes most glibly down.
 Thus tho' this trifler never wrote before,
 Yet faith he ventur'd on the common score:
 Since nonsense is so generally allow'd,
 He hopes that his may pass amongst the crowd.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

Spoken in the Character of *Deidamia*.

NOW who says Poets don't in blood delight?
 'Tis true the varlets care not much to fight;
 But faith they claw it off whene'er they write.
 Are Bully-Rocks not of the common size;
 Kill ye men faster than Domitian flies?
 Ours made such havock that the silly rogue
 Was forc'd to make me rise for th' Epilogue.
 The sop damn'd me, but e'er to hell I go,
 I'd very fain be satisfy'd if you
 Think it not just that he were serv'd so too.

As he hath yours, do you his hopes beguile ;
 You've been in purgatory all this while.
 Then damn him down to hell, and never spare ;
 Perhaps he'll find more favour there than here :
 Nay of the two may chuse the much less evil ;
 If you're but good when pleas'd, ev'n so's the devil.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Otway's* *TITUS* and *BERENICE*, with the
CHEATS of *SCAPIN*.

GALLANTS, our Author met me here to-day,
 And begg'd that I'd say something for his Play.
 You wags, that judge by rote, and damn by rule,
 Taking your measures from some Neighbour Fool,
 Who 'as impudence, a coxcomb's useful tool ; — }
 That always are severe, ye know not why,
 And would be thought great criticks by the bye ;
 With very much ill nature, and no wit,
 Just as you are, we humbly beg you'd sit, }
 And with your silly selves divert the pit.
 You men of sense, who heretofore allow'd
 Our author's follies, make him once more proud.
 But for the youths that newly 're come from France,
 Whose heads want sense, whose heels abound with dance :
 Our author to their judgment won't submit,
 But swears, that they, who so infest the pit }
 With their own follies, ne'er can judge of wit.
 'Tis thence he chiefly favour would implore ;

[*To the Boxes.*]

And, Fair Ones, pray oblige him on my score :
 Confine his foes, the sops, within their rules ;
 For, ladies, you know how to manage fools.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by Mrs. *Mary Lee*, when she was out of humour.

HOW little do you guess what I'm to say !
 I'm not to ask how you like Farce or Play :
 For you must know, I've other business now ;
 It is to tell ye, sparks, how we like you.
 How happy were we, when in humble guise
 You came with honest hearts and harmless eyes ;
 Sate, without noise and tumult in the pit :
 Oh what a precious jewel then was Wit !
 Tho' now 'tis grown so common, let me die,
 Gentlemen scorn to keep it company.
 Indulgent nature has too bounteous been,
 Your too much plenty is become your sin.
 Time was ye were as meek as now you're proud,
 Did not in curst cabals of criticks croud,
 Nor thought it witty to be very loud ;
 But came to see the follies you would shun ;
 Tho' now so fondly antick here you're grown ;
 T' invert the stage's purpose, and it's rules ;
 Make us spectators, whilst you play the fools.
 Equally witty, as some valiant are ;
 The sad defects of both are expos'd here.
 For here you'll censure, who disdain to write,
 And some make quarrels here that scorn to fight.
 The rugged soldier, that from war returns,
 And still with th' heat of former action burns ;
 Let him but hither come to see a play,
 Proceeds an arrant courtier in a day :

Shall steal from th' pit, and fly up to the box,
 There hold impertinent chat with tawdry maux :
 Till ere aware the blust'rer falls in love ;
 And Hero grows as harmless as a Dove.

With us the kind remembrance yet remains,
 When we were entertain'd behind our scenes.
 Tho' now, alas, we must your absence mourn,
 Whilst nought but quality will serve your turn.
 Damn'd quality ; that uses poaching arts,
 And (as 'tis said) comes mask'd to prey on hearts.
 The proper use of vizors once was made,
 When only worn by such as own'd the trade :
 Tho' now all mingle with 'em so together,
 That you can hardly know the one from t'other.
 But 'tis no matter ; on, pursue your game,
 Till wearied you return at last, and tame ;
 Know then 'twill be our turn to be severe ;
 For when you've left your stings behind you there,
 You lazy drones, you shan't have harbour here.

P R O L O G U E

'To Mr. *Otway's* FRIENDSHIP in FASHION.

HOW hard a task hath that poor drudge of stage,
 That strives to please in this fantastick age ?
 It is a thing so difficult to hit
 That he's a fool that thinks to do't by wit ;
 Therefore our author bid me plainly say,
 You must not look for any in his play.
 I'th' next place, Ladies, there's no bawdy in't,
 No not so much as one well-meaning hint ;
 Nay more, 'twas written ev'ry word, he says,
 On strictest Vigils, and on Fasting Days,

When he his flesh to penance did enjoin,
 Nay took such care to work it chaste and fine,
 He disciplin'd himself at ev'ry line.
 Then, gentlemen, no libel he intends,
 Tho' some have strove to wrong him with his Friends;
 And Poets have so very few of those,
 They'd need take care whose favour 'tis they lose,
 Who'd be a Poet! — Parents all beware,
 Cherish and educate your sons with care :
 Breed 'em to wholesome Law, or give 'em trades,
 Let 'em not follow th' Muses, they are jades :
 How many very hopeful rising Cits
 Have we of late known spoil'd by turning Wits ?
 Poets by Critics are worse treated here,
 Than on the bank-side butchers do a Bear. —
 Faith, sirs, be kind, since now his time is come,
 When he must stand or fall as you shall doom :
 Give him Bear-Garden+Law, that's Fair-play for't,
 And he's content for One, to make you sport.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

WELL, sirs, if now my spouse and I should part,
 To which kind Critic shall I give my heart ?
 Stay, let me look — Not one in all the place
 But has a scurvy, froward, damning face. —
 Have you resolv'd then on the Poet's fall ?
 Go you ill-natur'd, ugly devils all. —
 The marry'd sparks I know this Play will curse
 For the Wife's sake ! — but some of 'em have worse.
 Poets themselves their own ill-luck have wrought,
 You ne'er had learnt, had not their quarrels taught :

But as in the disturbance of a state,
 Each factious maggot thinks of growing great :
 So when the Poets first had jarring fits,
 You all set up for Critics, and for Wits :
 Then strait there came, which cost your mothers pains,
 Songs and Lampoons in litters from your brains :
 Libels, like spurious brats, ran up and down,
 Which their dull parents were ashamed to own ;
 But vented them in others names, like whores
 That lay their Bastards down at honest doors.
 For shame, leave off this higgling way of wit,
 Railing abroad, and roaring in the pit.
 Let Poets live in peace, in quiet write,
 Else may they all, to punish you, unite ;
 Join in one force to study to abuse ye,
 And teach your Wives and Misses how to use ye.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. Otway's DON CARLOS.

WHEN first our Author took this play in hand,
 He doubted much, and long was at a stand.

He knew the fame and memory of kings

Were to be treated of as sacred things,

Not as they're represented in this age,

Where they appear the lumber of the Stage !

Us'd only just for reconciling tools,

Or what is worse, made villains all, or fools.

Besides, the characters he shews to night,

He found were very difficult to write :

He found the fame of France and Spain at stake,

Therefore long paus'd, and fear'd which part to take ;

Till this his judgment safest understood,
 To make them both heroick as he cou'd.
 But now the greatest stop was yet unpass'd,
 He found himself, alas! confin'd too fast.
 He is a man of pleasure, sirs, like you,
 And therefore hardly could to business bow;
 Till at the last he did this conquest get,
 To make his pleasure whetstone to his wit,
 So sometimes for variety he writ.
 But as those blockheads, who discourse by rote,
 Sometimes speak sense, altho' they rarely know't:
 So he scarce knew to what his work would grow,
 But 'twas a Play, because it would be so:
 Yet well he knows this is a weak pretence,
 For idleness is the worst want of sense.
 Let him not now of carelessness be tax'd,
 He'll write in earnest, when he writes the next:
 Mean while —————
 Prune his superfluous branches, never spare;
 Yet do it kindly, be not too severe,
 He may bear better fruit another year.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by a little Girl.

NOW what d'ye think my message hither means?
 Yonder's the Poet sick behind the scenes:
 He told me there was pity in my face,
 And therefore sent me here to make his peace. —
 Let me for once persuade you to be kind;
 For he has promis'd me to stand my friend.

And if this time I can your kindness move,
 He'll write for me, he swears by all above,
 When I am big enough to be in love. —
 Now won't ye be good-natur'd, ye fine men?
 Indeed I'll grow as fast as e'er I can,
 And try if to his promise he'll be true,
 Think on't when that time comes, ye do not know
 But I may grow in love with some of you.
 Or, at the worst, I'm certain I shall see
 Amongst you those who'll swear they're so with me.
 But now, if by my suit you'll not be won,
 You know what your unkindness oft has done;
 I'll e'en forsake the play-house, and turn nun.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Otway's* ORPHAN, or the UNHAPPY MARRIAGE.

TO you, great judges in this writing age,
 The sons of Wit, and patrons of the Stage,
 With all those humble thoughts, which still have sway'd
 His pride, much doubting, trembling, and afraid
 Of what is to his want of merit due,
 And aw'd by ev'ry excellence in you,
 The Author sends to beg you will be kind,
 And spare those many faults you needs must find.
 You to whom Wit a common foe is grown,
 The thing ye scorn, and publickly disown;
 Though now perhaps y'are here for other ends,
 He swears to me, ye ought to be his friends:
 For he ne'er call'd ye yet insipid tools:
 Nor wrote one line to tell ye you were fools:
 But says of wit ye have so large a store,
 So very much, you never will have more.

He ne'er with libel treated yet the town,
 The names of honest men bedaw'd and shown;
 Nay, never once lampoon'd the harmless life
 Of suburb virgin, or of city wife.
 Satyr's th' effect of poetry's disease,
 Which, sick of a lewd age, she vents for ease,
 But now her only strife should be to please;
 Since of ill fate the baneful cloud's withdrawn,
 And happiness again begins to dawn;
 Since back with joy and triumph he is come,
 That always drew fears hence, ne'er brought 'em home.
 Oft has he plow'd the boist'rous ocean o'er,
 Yet ne'er more welcome to the longing shore,
 Not when he brought home victories before.
 For then fresh laurels flourish'd on his brow;
 And he comes crown'd with olive branches now:
 Receive him; oh receive him as his friends;
 Embrace the blessings which he recommends;
 Such quiet as your foes shall ne'er destroy;
 Then shake off fears, and clap your hands for joy.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

YOU'VE seen one Orphan ruin'd here; and I
 May be the next, if old Acasto die:
 Should it prove so, I'd fain amongst you find
 Who 'tis would to the fatherless be kind.
 To whose protection might I safely go?
 Is there among you no good-nature?—No.
 What shall I do?—Should I the godly seek,
 And go a conventicling twice a week?

Quit the lewd stage, and its prophane pollution,
 Affect each form and saint-like institution ;
 So draw the brethren all to contribution ?
 Or shall I (as I guess the poet may
 Within these three days) fairly run away ?
 No ; to some city-lodgings I'll retire ;
 Seem very grave, and privacy desire ;
 Till I am thought some heiress rich in lands,
 Fled to escape a cruel guardian's hands :
 Which may produce a story worth the telling
 Of the next sparks that go a fortune-stealing.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Otway's* History and Fall of CAIUS MARIUS.

IN ages past, (when will those times renew ?)
 When empires flourish'd, so did poets too.
 When great Augustus the world's empire held,
 Horace and Ovid's happy verse excell'd.
 Ovid's soft genius, and his tender arts
 Of moving nature, melted hardest hearts.
 It did th' imperial beauty, Julia, move
 To listen to the language of his love.
 Her father honour'd him : And on her breast,
 With ravish'd sense in her embraces prest,
 He lay transported, fancy-full, and blest.
 Horace's loftier genius boldlier rear'd
 His manly head, and thro' all nature steer'd ;
 Her richest pleasures in his verse refin'd,
 And wrought 'em to the relish of the mind.
 He lash'd, with a true poet's fearless rage,
 The villainies and follies of the age.

Therefore Mecænas, that great fav'rite, rais'd
 Him high, and by him was he highly prais'd.
 Our Shakespear wrote too in an age as blest,
 The happiest poet of his time, and best ;
 A gracious Prince's favour chear'd his muse,
 A constant favour he ne'er fear'd to lose.
 Therefore he wrote with fancy unconfin'd,
 And thoughts that were immortal as his mind.
 And from the crop of his luxuriant pen
 E'er since succeeding poets humbly glean.
 Tho' much the most unworthy of the throng,
 Our this day's poet fears he's done him wrong.
 Like greedy beggars that steal sheaves away,
 You'll find h'has rifled him of half a Play.
 Amidst his baser dross you'll see it shine
 Most beautiful, amazing, and divine.
 To such low shifts, of late, are Poets worn,
 Whilst we both Wit's and Cæsar's absence mourn ;
 Oh ! when will He and Poetry return ?
 When shall we there again behold him sit
 'Midst shining boxes and a courtly pit,
 The lord of hearts, and president of wit ?
 When that blest day (quick may it come) appears,
 His cares once banish'd, and his nation's fears,
 The joyful Muses on their hills shall sing
 Triumphant songs of Britain's happy King.
 Plenty and peace shall flourish in our isle,
 And all things like the English beauty smile.
 You, Critics, shall forget your natural spite,
 And Poets with unbounded fancy write :
 Ev'n this day's Poet shall be alter'd quite ;
 His thoughts more loftily and freely flow ;
 And he himself, whilst you his verse allow,
 As much transported as he's humble now.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken in the Character of *Lavinia*.

A Mischief on't! tho' I'm again alive,
 May I believe this Play of ours shall thrive?
 This drumming, trumpetting, and fighting Play:
 Why, what a devil will the people say?
 The nation that's without, and hears the din,
 Will swear we're raising volunteers again.
 For know, our Poet, when this Play was made,
 Had nought but drums and trumpets in his head.
 H'had banish'd Poetry and all her charms,
 And needs the Fool would be a Man at Arms.
 No prentice e'er grown weary of indentures,
 Had such a longing mind to seek adventures.
 Nay, sure at last th' infection general grew;
 For t'other day I was a captain too:
 Neither for Flanders nor for France to roam,
 But, just as you were all, to stay at home.
 And now for you who here come wrapt in cloaks,
 Only for love of Underhill and nurse Noakes;
 Our Poet says, one day to a Play ye come,
 Which serves ye half a year for Wit at home.
 But which amongst you is there is to be found,
 Will take his third-day's pawn for fifty pound?
 Or, now he is cashier'd, will fairly venture
 To give him ready money for's debenture?
 Therefore when he receiv'd that fatal doom,
 This Play came forth, in hopes his Friends would come
 To help a poor disbanded Soldier home.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Otway's* SOLDIER'S FORTUNE.Written by Lord *Falkland*.

Forsaken dames, with less concern reflect
 On their inconstant heroes cold neglect,
 Than we (provok'd by this ungrateful age)
 Bear the hard fate of our abandon'd Stage;
 With grief we see you ravish'd from our arms,
 And curse the feeble virtue of our charms:
 Curse your false hearts, for none so false as they,
 And curse the eyes that stole those hearts away.
 Remember, faithless friends, there was a time,
 (But oh the sad remembrance of our prime!)
 When to our arms with eager joys ye flew,
 And we believ'd your treacherous hearts as true
 As e'er was nymph of ours to one of you.
 But a more pow'rful * saint enjoys ye now;
 Fraught with sweet sins and absolutions too:
 To her are all your pious vows address'd,
 She's both your love's, and your religion's test,
 The fairest prelate of her time, and best.
 We own her more deserving far than we,
 A just excuse for your inconstancy.
 Yet 'twas unkindly done to leave us so;
 First to betray with love, and then undo,
 A horrid crime y' are all addicted to.
 Too soon, alas! your appetites are cloy'd,
 And Phillis rules no more, when once enjoy'd:

* Pope Joan.

But all rash oaths of love and constancy,
 With the too-short forgotten pleasures die :
 Whilst she, poor soul, robb'd of her dearest ease,
 Still drudges on, with vain desire to please ;
 And restless follows you from place to place,
 For tributes due to her autumnal face.
 Deserted thus by such ungrateful men,
 How can we hope you'il e'er return agen ?
 Here's no new charm to tempt ye as before,
 Wit's now our only treasure left in store,
 And that's a coin will pass with you no more :
 You who such dreadful bullies would appear,
 (True bullies ! quiet when there's danger near)
 Shew your great souls, in damning Poets here.

EPILOGUE

To the fame.

WITH the discharge of passions much oppress,
 Disturb'd in brain, and pensive in his breast,
 Full of those thoughts which make th' unhappy sad,
 And by imagination half grown mad,
 The Poet led abroad his mourning muse,
 And let her range, to see what sport she'd chuse.
 Strait like a bird got loose, and on the wing,
 Pleas'd with her freedom, she began to sing ;
 Each note was eccho'd all the vale along,
 And this was what she utter'd in her song: —
 Wretch, write no more for an uncertain fame,
 Nor call thy muse, when thou art dull, to blame.
 Consider with thyself how thou'rt unfit
 To make that monster of mankind, a Wit :

A Wit's a Toad, who swell'd with silly pride,
 Full of himself, scorns all the world beside ;
 Civil would seem, tho' he good manners lacks,
 Smiles on all faces, rails behind all backs,
 If e'er, good-natur'd, nought to ridicule,
 Good-nature melts a wit into a fool :
 Plac'd high like some jack-pudding, in a hall,
 At Christmas revels he makes sport for all.
 So much in little praises he delights,
 But when he's angry draws his pen and writes :
 A Wit to no man will his dues allow ;
 Wits will not part with a good word that's due :
 So whoe'er ventures on the ragged coast
 Of starving Poets, certainly is lost :
 They rail like porters at the penny-post.
 At a new Author's Play see one but sit,
 Making his snarling froward face of Wit,
 The merit he allows, and praise he grants,
 Comes like a tax from a poor wretch that wants.
 O Poets, have a care of one another,
 There's hardly one amongst ye true to t'other.
 Like Trinculo's and Stephano's, ye play
 The leudest tricks each other to betray.
 Like foes detract, yet flatt'ring friend-like smile,
 And all is one another to beguile
 Of praise, the monster of your barren isle.
 Enjoy the prostitute ye so admire,
 Enjoy her to the full of your desire,
 Whilst this poor scribbler wishes to retire,
 Where he may ne'er repent his follies more,
 But curse the fate that wreck'd him on your shore.
 Now you, who this day as his judges sit,
 After you've heard what he has said of Wit ;
 Ought for your own sakes not to be severe,
 But shew so much to think he meant none here.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Ottaway's* ATHEIST, or Second Part of the
SOLDIER'S FORTUNE.

THough Plays and Prologues ne'er did more abound,
Ne'er were good Prologues harder to be found.

To me the cause seems eas'ly understood ;
For there are Poets prove not very good,
Who, like base sign post dawbers, wanting skill,
Steal from great master's hands, and copy ill.
Thus, if by chance, before a noble feast
Of generous Wit, to whet and fit your taste,
Some poignant Satire in a Prologue rise,
And growing vices handsomely chastise ;
Each poetaster thence presumes on rules,
And ever after call ye downright fools.

These Marks describe him. —————

Writing by rote ; small wit, or none to spare ;
Jingle and chime's his study, toil and care :
He always in one line upbraids the Age ;
And a good reason why ; it rhymes to Stage.
With Wit and Pit he keeps a hideous pother ;
Sure to be damn'd by one, for want of t'other :
But if, by chance, he gets the French word Raillery,
Lord, how he feagues the vizor-masques with Gallery !

'Tis said, Astrologers strange wonders find,
To come, in two great Planets lately join'd.
From our two Houses joining, most will hold
Vast deluges of Dulness were foretold.
Poor Holborn Ballads now being worn away
By tides of duller Madrigals than they ;

Jockeys and Jenneys set to Northern Airs,
 While lowly Thespis chaunts at country fairs.
 Politick Ditties, full of Stage debate,
 And merry Catches, how to Rule the State.
 Vicars neglect their flocks, to turn Translators,
 And barley-water whey-fac'd Beaus write Satires ;
 'Tho' none can guess to which most praise belongs,
 To the learn'd Versions, Scandals, or the Songs.
 For all things now by contraries succeed ;
 Of Wit or Virtue there's no longer need :
 Beauty submits to him who loudest rails ;
 She fears the faucy fop, and he prevails.
 Who for his best preferment would devise,
 Let him renounce all Honesty, and rise.
 Villains and Parasites success will gain ;
 But in the court of Wit, shall dulness reign ?
 No : Let the angry 'squire give his Iambicks o'er,
 'Twirl cravat strings, but write Lampoons no more ;
 Rhymesters get Wit, e'er they pretend to shew it,
 Nor think a game at Crambo makes a Poet :
 Else is our Author hopeless of success,
 But then his study shall be next time less :
 He'll find out ways to your applause more easy ;
 'That is, write worse and worse, 'till he can please ye.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

Written by Mr. DUKE of Cambridge.

IT is not long, since in the noisy Pit
 Tumultuous Faction sat the judge of Wit ;
 Their Knaves applauded what their Blockheads writ.

At a Whig-Brother's Play, the bawling croud
Burst out in shouts, as zealous, and as loud,
As when some Member's stout Election-beer
Gains the mad Voice of a whole Drunken shire.

And yet, ev'n then, our Poet's truth was try'd,
Though 'twas a dev'lish pull to stem the tide ;
And tho' he ne'er did line of Treason write,
Nor made one rocket on Queen Bess's night,
Such was his fortune, or so good his cause,
Ev'n then he fail'd not wholly of applause.
He that could then escape, now bolder grows :
Since the Whig-tide runs out, the Loyal flows.
All you who lately here presum'd to bawl,
Take warning from your brethren at Guildhall :
The Spirit of Rebellion there is quell'd,
And here your Poet's Acts are all repeal'd :
Impartial Justice has resum'd again
Her awful seat, nor bears the sword in vain.
The Stage shall lash the follies of the times,
And the Law's Vengeance overtake the Crimes.
The Perjur'd Wretch shall no protection gain
From his dishonour'd Robe and Golden Chain ;
But stand expos'd to all th' insulting town,
While rotten Rags bedawb the Scarlet Gown.
Pack hence betimes, you that were never sparing
To save the land, and damn yourselves, by swearing.

Should the wise City now, to ease your fears,
Erect an office to insure your ears ?
Thither such numerous shoals of Witnesses,
And Juries, conscious of their guilt wou'd press,
That to the Chamber hence might more be gain'd,
Than ever Mother Creswell from it drain'd ;
And Perjury to the Orphan's Bank restore
Whatever Whoredom robb'd it of before.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Otway's* VENICE PRESERVED.

IN these distracted times, when each man dreads
 The bloody stratagems of busy heads ;
 When we have fear'd three years we know not what,
 'Till witnesses begin to die o' th' rot ;
 What made our Poet meddle with a Plot ?
 Was't that he fancy'd, for the very sake
 And name of Plot, his trifling Play might take ?
 For there's not in't one inch-board evidence,
 But 'tis, he says, to reason plain and sense,
 And that he thinks a plausible defence.
 Were truth by sense and reason to be try'd,
 Sure all our swearers might be laid aside ;
 No, of such tools our Author has no need,
 To make his Plot, or make his Play succeed :
 He, of black bills, has no prodigious tales,
 Or Spanish pilgrims cast ashore in Wales :
 Here's not one murder'd magistrate, at least,
 Kept rank, like ven'son, for a city feast,
 Grown four days stiff, the better to prepare
 And fit his pliant limbs to ride in chair.
 Yet here's an army rais'd, tho' under ground,
 But no man seen, nor one commission found :
 Here is a traytor too, that's very old,
 Turbulent, subtle, mischievous, and bold ;
 Bloody, revengeful ; and, to crown his part,
 Loves fumbling with a wench with all his heart :
 'Till, after having many changes past,
 In spite of age (thanks t' heav'n) is hang'd at last :

Next is a senator that keeps a whore,
 In Venice none a higher office bore,
 To lewdness ev'ry night the leacher ran;
 Shew me, all London, such another man;
 Match him at mother Creswell's if you can.
 O Poland, Poland! had it been thy lot,
 T' have heard in time of this Venetian Plot,
 Thou surely chosen hadst one king from thence,
 And honour'd them, as thou hast England since.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

THE text is done, and now for application,
 And when that's ended, pass your approbation.
 Though the conspiracy's prevented here,
 Methinks I see another hatching there:
 And there's a certain faction fain would sway,
 If they had strength enough, and damn this Play:
 But this the Author bid me boldly say,
 If any take this plainness in ill part,
 He's glad-on't from the bottom of his heart:
 Poets in honour of the truth should write,
 With the same spirit brave men for it fight.
 And though against him causeless hatreds rise,
 And daily where he goes of late he spies
 The scowles of sullen and revengeful eyes;
 'Tis what he knows, with much contempt, to bear,
 And serves a cause too good to let him fear.
 He fears no poison from an incens'd drab,
 No ruffian's five foot sword, nor rascal's stab;
 Nor any other snares of mischief laid,
 Not a rose-alley cudgel ambuscade;

From any private cause where malice reigns,
 Or general pique all blockheads have to brains :
 Nothing shall daunt his pen, when truth does call,
 No, not the * picture-mangler at Guildhall.
 The rebel-tribe, of which that's vermin's one,
 Have now set forward, and their course begun ;
 And while that prince's figure they deface,
 As they before had massacred his name,
 Durst their base fears but look him in the face,

They'd use his person as they've us'd his fame :
 A face in which such lineament they read
 Of that great martyr's, whose rich blood they shed,
 That their rebellious hate they still retain,
 And in his son would murder him again.
 With indignation then let each brave heart,
 Rouze, and unite, to take his injur'd part ;
 'Till royal love and goodness call him home,
 And songs of triumphs meet him as he come :
 'Till heav'n his honour and our peace restore,
 And villains never wrong his virtue more.

P R O L O G U E

SPOKEN UPON

His Royal Highness the Duke of YORK
 coming to the Theatre, Friday, April 21, 1682.

WHEN too much plenty, luxury, and ease,
 Had surfeited this isle to a disease ;
 When noisefome blains did it's best parts o'erspread,
 And on the rest their dire infection shed ;

* The rascal that cut the Duke of York's picture.

Our Great Physician, who the nature knew
 Of the distemper, and from whence it grew,
 Fix'd for Three Kingdoms quiet (Sir) on You. }
 He cast his searching eyes o'er all the frame,
 And finding whence before one Sickness came,
 How once before our Mischiefs foster'd were,
 Knew well Your Virtue, and apply'd you there :
 Where so your goodness, so your justice sway'd,
 You but appear'd, and the wild Plague was stay'd.

When, from the filthy Dunghill-faction bred,
 New form'd Rebellion durst rear up it's head, }
 Answer me all : Who struck the Monster dead ?

See, see, the injur'd Prince, and blest his name,
 Think on the Martyr from whose loins he came :
 Think on the blood was shed for you before,
 And curse the Parricides that thirst for more.
 His foes are yours, then of their wiles beware :
 Lay, lay him in your hearts, and guard him there :
 Where let his Wrongs your zeal for him improve ;
 He wears a sword will justify your love.
 With blood still ready for your good t' expend,
 And has a heart that ne'er forgot his friend.

His Duteous Loyalty before you lay,
 And learn of him, unmutm'ring, to obey.
 Think what he's born, your quiet to restore,
 Repent your madness, and rebel no more.

No more let Bout'feu's hope to lead petitions ;
 Scriv'ners to be treasurers ; Pedlars, politicians ;
 Nor ev'ry fool, whose wife has tript at court,
 Pluck up a spirit, and turn Rebel for't.

In lands where cuckolds multiply like ours,
 What Prince can be too jealous of their powers,
 Or can too often think himself alarm'd ?
 They're Male-contents that ev'ry where go arm'd :

And when the horned Herd's together got,
Nothing portends a Commonwealth like that.

Cast, cast your idols off, your gods of wood,
E'er yet Philistines fatten with your blood:
Renounce your priests of Baal with amen faces,
Your Wapping feasts, and your Mile-end high-places.

Nail all your Medals on the gallows post,
In recompence th' Original was lost:
At these, illustrious repentance pay,
In his kind hands your humble off'rings lay:
Let Royal Pardon be by him implor'd,
Th' Attoning Brother of your Anger'd Lord:
He only brings a Medicine fit to assuage
A People's Folly, and rous'd Monarch's Rage.

An Infant Prince yet lab'ring in the womb,
Fated with wond'rous happiness to come,
He goes to fetch the mighty blessings home:
Send all your wishes with him, let the air
With gentle breezes waft it safely here,
The seas, like what they'll carry, calm and fair:
Let the Illustrious Mother touch our land
Mildly, as hereafter may her Son command;
While our glad Monarch welcomes her to shore,
With kind assurance she shall part no more.

Be the Majestick Babe then smiling born,
And all good signs of fate his birth adorn;
So live and grow, a constant pledge to stand
Of Caesar's love to an obedient land.



P R O L O G U E

To *George Villiers Duke of Buckingham's* REHEARSAL.

WE might well call this short Mock-play of ours,
 A posy made of Weeds instead of Flowers ;
 Yet such have been presented to your noses,
 And there are such, I fear, who thought 'em Roses.
 Would some of 'em were here, to see, this night,
 What stuff it is in which they took delight !
 Here brisk insipid rogues, for Wit, let fall
 Sometimes dull Sense ; but oftner none at all ;
 There strutting heroes, with a grim-fac'd train,
 Shall brave the gods in King Cambyfes' vein.
 For (changing rules, of late, as if men writ,
 In spite of reason, nature, art and wit)
 Our Poets make us laugh at Tragedy,
 And with their Comedies they make us cry.
 Now Criticks, do your worst, that here are met ;
 For, like a rook, I have hedg'd in my bet.
 If you approve ; I shall assume the state
 Of those high-flyers, whom I imitate :
 And justy too, for I will teach you more
 Than ever they would let you know before ;
 I will not only shew the feats they do,
 But give you all their reasons for 'em too.
 Some honour may to me from hence arise ;
 But if by my endeavours you grow wise,
 And what you once so prais'd, shall now despise ;
 Then I'll cry out, swell'd with poetick rage,
 'Tis I, *John Lacy*, have reform'd your Stage.



E P I L O G U E

To the same.

THE Play is at an end, but where's the Plot ?
 That circumstance our Poet *Bayes* forgot.
 And we can boast, tho' tis a plotting age,
 No place is freer from it than the Stage.
 The antients plotted, though, and strove to please
 With sense that might be understood with ease ;
 They every Scene with so much Wit did store,
 That who brought any in, went out with more.
 But this new way of Wit does so surprize,
 Men lose their Wits in wond'ring where it lies.
 If it be true, that monstrous births presage
 The following mischiefs that afflict the age,
 And sad disasters to the state proclaim ;
 Plays without Head or Tail may do the same.
 Wherefore for ours, and for the kingdom's peace,
 May this prodigious way of writing cease.
 Let's have at least, once in our lives, a time
 When we may hear some Reason, not all Rhyme.
 We have this ten years felt its influence,
 Pray let this prove a year of Prose and Sense.

P R O L O G U E

To *George Villiers* Duke of *Buckingham's* CHANCES.

OF all men, those have reason least to care
 For being laugh'd at, who can laugh their share :
 And that's a thing our Author's apt to use
 Upon occasion, when no man can chuse.

Suppose now at this instant one of you
 Were tickled by a fool, what would you do ?
 'Tis ten to one you'd laugh : here's just the case,
 For there are fools that tickle with their face.
 Your gay fool tickles with his dress and motions ;
 But your grave fool of fools with silly notions.
 Is it not then unjust that fops should still
 Force one to laugh, and then take laughing ill ?
 Yet since perhaps to some it gives offence,
 That men are tickled at the want of sense ;
 Our Author thinks he takes the readiest way
 To shew all he has laugh'd at here fair play.
 For if ill writing be a folly thought,
 Correcting ill is sure a greater fault.
 Then gallants laugh, but chuse the right place first,
 For judging ill is of all faults the worst.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

PERHAPS you, gentlemen, expect to-day
 The Author of this Fag-end of a Play,
 According to the modern way of Wit,
 Should strive to be before-hand with the Pit ;
 Begin to rail at you, and subtly to
 Prevent the affront by giving the first blow.
 He wants not precedents, which often sway
 In matters far more weighty than a Play :
 But he, no grave admirer of a rule,
 Won't by example learn to play the fool.
 The ends of Plays should be to entertain,
 And not to keep the auditors in pain.

210 P R O L O G U E S, and

Giving our price, and for what trash we please,
 He thinks the Play being done, you should have ease.
 No Wit, no Sense, no Freedom, and a Box,
 Is much like paying money for the Stocks.
 Besides, the Author dreads the strut and mein
 Of new-prais'd Poets, having often seen
 Some of his fellows, who have writ before,
 When Nell has danc'd her jig, steal to the door,
 Hear the Pit clap, and with conceit of that
 Swell, and believe themselves the lord knows what.
 Most writers now-a-days are grown so vain,
 That once approv'd, they write, and write again,
 'Till they have writ away the fame they got,
 Our Friend this way of writing fancies not.
 And hopes you will not tempt him with your praise,
 To rank himself with some that write new Plays :
 For he knows ways enough to be undone,
 Without the help of Poetry for one.

P R O L O G U E

To *John Sheffield* Duke of *Buckingham's* Alteration of
 JULIUS CÆSAR.

H OPE to mend *Shakeſpear!* or to match his ſtile !
 'Tis ſuch a jeſt, would make a ſtoick ſmile.
 Too fond of fame, our Poet ſoars too high ;
 Yet freely owns he wants the wings to fly :
 So ſenſible of his preſumptuous thought,
 That he confeſſes while he does the fault :
 This to the fair will no great wonder prove,
 Who oft in bluſhes yield to what they love.

Of greateſt actions, and of nobleſt men,
 This ſtory moſt deſerves a Poet's pen.

For who can wish a scene more justly fam'd,
 When Rome and mighty Julius are but nam'd!
 That State of Heroes, who the World had brav'd!
 That wond'rous Man, who such a State enslav'd!
 Yet loath he was to take so rough a way,
 And after govern'd with so mild a sway,
 At distance now of sev'nteen hundred years,
 Methinks a lovely ravisher appears;
 Whom, tho' forbid by virtue to excuse,
 A nymph might pardon, and could scarce refuse.

P R O L O G U E

To *John Sheffield* Duke of *Buckingham's* MARCUS BRUTUS.

OUR scene is Athens. And great Athens nam'd,
 What soul so dull as not to be inflam'd?
 Methinks, at mentioning that sacred place,
 A rev'rend awe appears in ev'ry face,
 For men so fam'd, of such prodigious parts,
 As taught the world all sciences and arts.
 Amidst all these, ye shall behold a man
 The most applauded since makind began;
 Out-shining ev'n those Greeks who most excel;
 Whose life was one fix'd course of doing well.
 Oh! who can therefore without tears attend
 On such a life, and such a fatal end?

But here our Author, besides other faults
 Of ill expressions, and of vulgar thoughts,
 Commits one crime and needs an act of grace,
 And breaks the laws of unity of place:
 Yet, to such noble patriots, overcome
 By factious violence, and banish'd Rome,

Athens alone a fit retreat could yield :
 And where can Brutus fall, but in Philippi Field ?
 Some Criticks judge, ev'n love itself too mean
 A care to mix in such a lofty scene,
 And with those ancient bards of Greece believe
 Friendship has stronger charms to please or grieve :
 But our more am'rous Poet, finding love,
 Amidst all other cares, still shines above ;
 Let not the best of Romans end their lives,
 Without just softness for the kindest wives.
 Yet, if ye think his gentle nature such,
 As to have soften'd this great tale too much,
 Soon will your eyes grow dry, and passion fall ;
 When ye reflect, 'tis all but conjugal.

This to the few and knowing was address ;
 And now 'tis fit I should salute the rest.

Most reverend dull judges of the Pit,
 By nature curs'd with the wrong side of Wit !
 You need not care whate'er you see to-night,
 How ill some Players act, or Poets write ;
 Should our mistakes be never so notorious,
 You'll have the joy of being more censorious :
 Shew your small talent then, let that suffice ye ;
 But grow not vain upon it, I advise ye ;
 Each petty critic can objections raise,
 The greatest skill is knowing when to praise.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Banks's* VIRTUE BETRAYED, OR ANNA BULLEN.

Written by a Person of Quality.

TO all impartial Judges in the Pit,
 And ev'ry beauteous patroness of Wit;
 I'm sent to plead the Poet's cause, and say,
 There's not one slander in his modest Play.
 He brings before your eyes a modern story,
 Yet meddles not with either Whig or Tory.
 Was't not enough, vain men of either side,
 Two Roses once the Nation did divide?
 But must it be in danger now agen,
 Betwixt our Scarlet and Green-Ribbon men?
 Who made this diff'rence were not England's friends:
 Be not their tools to serve their plotting ends.
 Damn the State-fop, who here his zeal discovers,
 And o'er the Stage, like our ill genius, hovers;
 Give us a Pit of Drunkards, and of Lovers;
 Good sanguine men, who mind not state affair,
 But bid a base world of itself take care.
 We hope there lives not so abhorr'd a thing,
 But loves his Country, and would serve his King.
 But in your Parties, why should we engage,
 Or meddle with the Plots of a mad age?
 We lose enough by those upon the Stage.
 Welcome mask-teazer, peevish gamester, huffer;
 All fools but politicians we can suffer;
 A God's name, let each keep to his vocation;
 Our trade is to mend you, and not the nation:

Besides, our Author hath this further end,
 'Tis not enough if but one's side's his friend,
 He needs you all his weakness to defend :
 And to oblige you to't, hopes he has shown
 No country has men braver than your own.
 His heroes all to England are confin'd ;
 To your own fathers (sure) you will be kind.

He brings no foreigners to move your pity,
 But sends them to a jury of the city.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

WELL, sirs, your kind opinion now, I pray,
 Of this our neither Whig nor Tory Play :
 To blow such coals our conscious muse denies ;
 Wit, sacred Wit, such subjects should despise.
 The Author says, his Heliconian stream
 Is not yet drain'd to such a low extreme ;
 T' abuse one party with a cursed Play,
 And bribe the other for a large Third Day.
 Like gladiators, then you strait resort ;
 And croud to make your Nero-fashion sport.
 But what's more strange, that men of sense should do it !
 For worrying one another, pay the Poet :
 So butchers at a baiting, take delight,
 For him that keeps the bears, to roar and fight ;
 Both friends and foes such Authors make their game,
 Who have your money, that was all their aim :
 No matter for the Play, nor for their Wit,
 The better Farce is acted in the Pit.

Both parties to be cheated will agree,
 And swallow any nonsense, so it be
 With faction fac'd, and guilt with loyalty.
 Here's such a rout with whigging and with torying,
 That you neglect your dear-lov'd sin of whoring :
 The vizor-mask that ventur'd her half-crown,
 Finding no hopes but here to be undone,
 Like a cast mistress past her dear delight,
 Turns godly strait, and goes to church in spite ;
 And does not doubt, since you are grown so fickle,
 To find more cullies in a conventicle :
 We on the Stage stand still, and are content,
 To see you act what we should represent.
 You use us like the women that ye woo ;
 You make us sport, and pay us for it too.
 Well, we're resolv'd, that in our next play-bill,
 We'll print at large a trial of your skill,
 And that five hundred monsters are to fight ;
 Then more will run to see so strange a fight,
 Than the Morocco, or the Moscovite.

P R O L O U G E

To Mr. *Banks's* EARL of ESSEX.

Spoken by Major MAHON, the first four Days.

THE merchant joyful with the hopes of gain,
 Ventures his life and fortunes on the main ;
 But the poor Poet, oft'ner does expose
 More than his life, his credit, for applause ;
 The Play's his vessel, and his venture Wit,
 Hopes are his Indies, rocks and seas the Pit.
 Yet the good-natur'd Author bids me swear
 He'll court you still the more his fate draws near ;

And cannot chuse but blame their feeble rage,
 That crow at you, upon their dunghill Stage :
 A certain sign they merit to be curst,
 When to excuse their fault, they cry whore first.
 So oft in their dull Prologues 'tis exprest,
 That Critick now becomes no more a jest;
 Methinks self int'rest in 'em more shou'd rule,
 There's none so impudent to ask a dole,
 And then to call his benefactor fool.
 They merit to be damn'd as well as poor ;
 For who that's in a storm, and hears it roar,
 But then would pray, that never pray'd before ?
 Yet seas are calm sometimes ; and you like those,
 Are necessary friends, but cursed foes.
 But if amongst you all he has no friend,
 He humbly begs that you would be so kind,
 Lay malice by, and use him as you find.

*[For the Epilogue to this Play see Dryden's Epilogues
 at the beginning of this Volume.]*

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. Banks's CYRUS THE GREAT.

Addressed to her Royal Highness the Princess ANNE
 of DENMARK.

WHEN all that we thought great and good was gone,
 And the whole world did in that deluge drown,
 When mourning Cupids flagg'd their tender wings,
 And the sad muses broke their warbling strings ;
 When she was fled that shin'd with pity here,
 What cou'd revive the drooping Theatre ! —

But from the Phoenix ashes in their spice,
 Lo, I behold another goddess rise.
 All blessings that with her, great Princess, flew,
 Can never be restor'd us, but in You.
 The dove in the glad ark was not so kind,
 Who brought the olive, and reviv'd mankind.
 The laurels fading now behind our scene,
 Like Virgil's grotto, shall be ever green.
 Let conquering William send abroad his darts,
 Secure for him you rule his peoples hearts.
 And his soft pledge only herself withdrew,
 Whilst all her Miracles succeed in You :
 Then let's to Heav'n in loudest anthems sing
 That such bright hopes we have, and such a King.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by a Boy and Girl, by way of DIALOGUE.

Curtain falls.

Girl. **H**OLD, is the Play done ?

Boy. Ay, pretty rogue.

Girl. What, a new Play without an Epilogue !

Boy. Laufaria's dead, Panthea too is slain,

And wou'd you have dead bodies rise again ?

That were indeed a very pretty fact,

You had enough of that in the first Act.

Girl. Why what d'you make of Mr. Betterton ?

Boy. The curtain's dropt, and he's glad he's gone ;

The Poet too, has loaded him so fore,

He scarce has breath enough for one word more.

Since most of the old Actors then are kill'd,
 And the great Hero has forsook the field;
 What if WE did to cover such a blot,
 Address ourselves to th' audience?

Girl. That's well thought;
 And since we must say something, pray begin,
 You to the ladies, I the gentlemen.

Boy. Ladies, if you will to our Play be kind,
 May every one their dear last wishes find;
 May virgins those enjoy they value best,
 And wives their husbands kindness to the last.
 At basset may your good luck so continue,
 And win the gamester's heart, as well as guinea.

Girl. And, gentlemen, if you will like our Play,
 May this good fate attend you ev'ry day.
 Let no rude Boreas, from his boisterous cell,
 Profane the curl that on your wig fits well.
 Nor brush the sacred powder from the cloaths
 Of two such fights of dainty-dappl'd beaux.
 May nothing bring you out of humour hither,
 Nor hackney-coach be wanting in wet weather.

Boy. Ladies, w'are almost sure of your good natures,
 'Twere cruel to deny such little creatures.

Girl. And if the men mislike, or make a pother,

Boy. Evads we'll fit 'em for't one way or other.
 'Tis a wise child that knows its father, sirs,
 For aught we know, we may be some of yours,
 We'll come and lay ourselves before your doors.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Wycherley's* Love in a Wood.

CUSTOM, which bids the thief from cart harangue,
All those that come to make and see him hang,
Wills the damn'd Poet, though he know's he's gone,
To greet you, ere his execution.

Not having fear of critic 'fore his eyes ;
But still rejecting wholesome, good advice,
He e'en is come to suffer here to-day,
For counterfeiting, as you judge, a Play,
Which is against dread Phœbus highest treason :
Damn, damning judges, therefore, you have reason.
You he does mean, who for the self-same fault,
That damning privilege of yours have bought.
So the huge bankers, when they needs must fail,
Send the small brothers of their trade to jail ;
Whilst they, by breaking, gentlemen are made,
Then, more than any, scorn poor men o'th' trade.
You harden'd Rénegado Poets, who
Treat rhiming Poets worse than Turk wou'd do :
But vent your heathenish rage, hang, draw, and quarter,
His muse will die to day a fleeing martyr ;
Since for bald jest, dull libel, or lampoon,
There are who suffer persecution,
With the undaunted briskness of buffoon ;
And strict professors live of raillery,
Defying porter's lodge or pillory.
For those who yet write on, our poet's fate
Should, as co-sufferers, commiserate ;

But he in vain their pity now wou'd crave,
 Who for themselves, alas! no pity have,
 And their own gasping credit will not save.
 And those much less, our criminal wou'd spare,
 Who ne'er in rhyme transgress, if such there are :
 Well then, who nothing hopes, needs nothing fear ;
 And he, before your cruel votes shall do it,
 By his despair declares himself no Poet.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

Spoken by DAPPERWIT.

NOW, my brisk brothers of the Pit, you'll say,
 I'm come to speak a good word for the Play ;
 But (gallants) let me perish, if I do,
 For I have Wit, and Judgment, just like you ;
 Wit never partial, Judgment free and bold,
 For fear or friendship never bought or sold,
 Nor by good nature e'er to be cajol'd
 Good nature in a critic were a crime,
 Like mercy in a judge, and renders him
 Guilty of all those faults, he does forgive :
 Besides, if thief from gallows you reprieve,
 He'll cut your throat ; so Poet sav'd from shame,
 In damn'd lampoon will murder your good name.

Yet in true spite to him, and to his Play,
 (Good faith) you shou'd not rail at 'em to-day :
 But to be more his foe, seem most his friend,
 And so, maliciously, the Play commend,
 That he may be betray'd to writing on,
 And Poet let him be, to be undone.



P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Wycherley's* GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER.

Addressed to the CITY.

Newly after the Removal of the Duke's Company from *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, to their new Theatre near *Salisbury-Court*.

OUR Author (like us) finding 'twou'd scarce do,
 At t'other end o'th' Town, is come to you ;
 And since 'tis his last trial, has that wit
 To throw himself on a substantial Pit ;
 Where needy Wit, or Critic dare not come,
 Lest Neighbour i'the cloak, with looks so grum,
 Shou'd prove a Dun :
 Where Punk in vizer dare not rant and tear,
 To put us out, since Bridewell is so near,
 In short, we shall be heard, be understood,
 If not, shall be admir'd, and that's as good ;
 For you to senseless Plays have still been kind,
 Nay, where no Sense was, you a Jest wou'd find
 And never was it heard of, that the City
 Did ever take occasion to be witty
 Upon dull Poet, or stiff Player's action,
 But still with claps oppos'd the hissing faction.
 But if you hiss'd, 'twas at the Pit, not Stage ;
 So, with the Poet, damn'd the damning Age.
 And still we know are ready to engage
 Against the flouting, ticking Gentry, who
 Citizen, Player, Poet wou'd undo :
 The Poet ! no, unless by commendation,
 For on the 'Change Wits have no reputation :
 And rather than be branded for a Wit,
 He with you Able Men wou'd credit get.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

Spoken by FLIRT.

THE ladies first I am to compliment,
 Whom (if he cou'd) the Poet wou'd content;
 But to their pleasure then they must consent.
 Must spoil their sport still by their modesty,
 And when they shou'd be pleas'd, cry out, O fie,
 And the least smutty jest will ne'er pass by.
 But city damsel ne'er had confidence,
 At smutty Play to take the least offence,
 But mercy shews, to shew her innocence.

Yet lest the merchant's daughter shou'd to day
 Be scandaliz'd, not at our harmless Play,
 But our Hippolita, since she's like one
 Of us bold flirts of t'other end o'th' town;
 Our poet sending to you (tho' unknown)
 His best respects by me, does frankly own
 'The Character to be unnatural;
 Hippolita is not like you at all:
 You, while your lovers court you, still look grum,
 And far from wooing, when they woo, cry mum;
 And if some of you e'er were stol'n away,
 Your portions fault 'twas only, I dare say.
 Thus much for him the Poet bid me speak,
 Now to the men I my own mind will break:
 You good men o'th' Exchange, on whom alone
 We must depend, when sparks to sea are gone;
 Into the Pit already you are come,
 'Tis but a step more to our tyring-room;

Where none of us but will be wond'rous sweet
 Upon an able Love of Lombard-street :
 You we had rather see between our scenes,
 Than spendthrift fops with better clothes and meins ;
 Instead of lac'd coats, belts, and pantaloons,
 Your velvet jumps, gold chains, and grave fur gowns ;
 Instead of perriwigs, and broad cock'd hats,
 Your satin caps, small cuffs, and vast cravats :
 For you are fair and square in all your dealings,
 You never cheat your doxies with gilt shillings ;
 You ne'er will break our windows ; then you are
 Fit to make love, while our huzzas make war ;
 And since all gentlemen must pack to sea,
 Our gallants, and our judges you must be :
 We therefore, and our Poet, do submit,
 To all the Camblet Cloaks now i'the Pit.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Wycherley's* PLAIN DEALER.

Spoken by the Plain Dealer.

I The Plain Dealer am to act to-day,
 And my rough part begins before the Play.
 First, you who scribble, yet hate all that write,
 And keep each other company in spite,
 As rivals in your common mistress, fame,
 And with faint praises, one another damn :
 'Tis a good Play, we know, you can't forgive,
 But grudge yourselves the pleasure you receive.
 Our scribbler therefore bluntly bid me say,
 He wou'd not have the Wits pleas'd here to-day.

Next, you, the fine, loud Gentlemen o'th' Pit,
 Who damn all Plays; yet, if y'ave any Wit,
 'Tis but what here you sponge, and daily get :
 Poets, like friends to whom you are in debt,
 You hate; and so rooks laugh, to see undone
 Those pushing gamesters whom they live upon.
 Well, you are sparks; and still will be i' th' fashion;
 Rail then at Plays, to hide your obligation.
 Now, you shrewd Judges, who the boxes sway,
 Leading the ladies hearts and sense astray,
 And for their sakes, see all, and hear no Play;
 Correct your cravats, foretops, lock behind;
 The dress and breeding of the Play ne'er mind.
 Plain-Dealing is, you'll say, quite out of fashion;
 You'll hate it here, as in a dedication.
 And you fair neighbours, in a limning Poet,
 No more than in a painter will allow it.
 Pictures too like, the ladies will not please;
 They must be drawn too here like goddesses.
 You, as at Lely's too, wou'd truncheon wield,
 And look like heroes, in a painted field :
 But the coarse dauber of the coming scenes,
 To follow life and nature only means,
 Displays you as you are, makes his fine woman
 A mercenary jilt, and true to no man :
 His men of wit, and pleasure of the age,
 Are as dull rogues as ever cumber'd Stage.
 He draws a friend only to custom just,
 And makes him naturally break his trust.
 I only act a part like none of you,
 And yet you'll say, it is a fool's part too :
 An honest man, who like you, never winks
 At faults; but unlike you, speaks what he thinks :

The only fool, who ne'er found patron yet,
 For truth is now a fault as well as wit.
 And where else, but on stages, do we see
 Truth pleasing, or rewarded honesty?
 Which our bold Poet does this day in me.
 If not to th' honest, be to th' prosperous kind,
 Some friends at court let the Plain Dealer find.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by the Widow *Blackacre*.

TO you the judges learned in stage-laws,
 Our poet now, by me, submits his cause;
 For with young judges, such as most of you,
 The men by women best their bus'ness do:
 And, truth on't is, if you did not sit here,
 To keep us for a term thro'out the year,
 We cou'd not live by'r tongues: nay, but for you,
 Our chamber-practice wou'd be little too.
 And 'tis not only the Stage-practicer
 Who, by your meeting, gets her living here:
 For, as in hall of Westminster,
 Sleek sempstresses vents, amidst the courts, her ware;
 So while we bawl, and you in judgment sit,
 The vizor-mask sells linen too i'th' Pit.
 O, many of your friends, besides us here,
 Do live by putting off their sev'ral ware.
 Here's daily done the great affairs o'th' the nation;
 Let love and us then ne'er have long vacation.
 But hold; like other pleaders I have done
 Not my poor client's business, but my own.

Spare me a word then now for him. First know,
 'Squires of the long robe, he does humbly show,
 He has a just right in abusing you,
 Because he is a Brother-Templar too :
 For at the Bar you rally one another ;
 Nay, fool and knave is swallow'd from a brother :
 If not the Poet here, the Templar spare,
 And maul him when you catch him at the Bar.
 For you, our common modish censurers,
 Your favour, not your judgment 'tis he fears :
 Of all love begs you then to rail, and fault ;
 For Plays, like women, by the world are thought
 (When you speak kindly of 'em) very naught. }

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Wycherley's* COUNTRY WIFE.

POETS, like cudgell'd bullies, never do
 At first or second blow submit to you ;
 But will provoke you still, and ne'er have done,
 Till you are weary first with laying on :
 The late so baffled scribbler of this day,
 Tho' he stands trembling, bids me boldly say,
 What we before most Plays are us'd to do,
 For Poets out of fear first draw on you ;
 In a fierce Prologue the still Pit defy,
 And e'er you speak, like Castril, give the lie.
 But tho' our *Bayes's* battles oft I've fought,
 And with bruis'd knuckles their dear conquests bought ;
 Nay, never yet fear'd odds upon the Stage,
 In Prologue dare not hector with the age ;
 But would take quarter from your saving hands,
 Tho' *Bayes* within all yielding countermands,

Says, you confed'rate wits no quarter give,
 Therefore his Play shan't ask your leave to live.
 Well, let the vain rash fop, by huffing so,
 Think to obtain the better terms of you ;
 But we, the Actors, humbly will submit,
 Now, and at any time, to a full Pit ;
 Nay, often we anticipate your rage,
 And murder Poets for you on our Stage :
 We set no guards upon our tyring-room,
 But when with flying colours there you come,
 We patiently, you see, give up to you
 Our Poets, Virgins, nay, our Matrons too.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

NOW you the vigorous, who daily here
 O'er vizard-mask in publick domineer,
 And what you'd do to her, if in place where ;
 Nay, have the confidence to cry, come out,
 Yet when she says, lead on, you are not stout :
 But to your well-dress'd brother strait turn round,
 And cry, pox on her, Ned, she can't be found.
 Then sink away, a fresh one to engage,
 With so much seeming heat and loving rage,
 You'd frighten list'ning Actresses on the Stage ;
 Till she at last has seen you huffing come,
 And talk of keeping in the tyring-room,
 Yet cannot be provok'd to lead her home :
 Next you Falstaffs of fifty, who beset
 Your buckram maidenheads, which your friends get ;
 And whilst to them you of atchievements boast,
 They share the booty, and laugh at your cost.

In fine, you effenc'd boys, both old and young,
 Who wou'd be thought so eager, brisk and strong,
 Yet do the ladies, not their husbands wrong,
 Whose purses for your manhood make excuse,
 And keep your Flanders mares for shew, not use ;
 Encourag'd by our woman's man to day,
 A *Horner's* part may vainly think to play ;
 And may intrigues so bashfully disown,
 That they may doubted be by few or none,
 May kiss the cards at piquet, ombre,—loo,
 And so be taught to kiss the lady too ;
 But, gallants, have a care, faith, what you do.
 The world, which to no man his due will give,
 You by experience know you can deceive,
 And Men may still believe you vigorous,
 But then we Women——there's no couz'ning us.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Addison's* CATO.

Written by *Alexander Pope*, Esq;

TO wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
 To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,
 To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
 Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold :
 For this the Tragic Muse first trod the Stage,
 Commanding tears to stream thro' every age ;
 Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
 And foes to virtue wonder'd how they wept.
 Our Author shuns by vulgar springs to move
 The Hero's glory, or the Virgin's love ;

In pitying love we but our weakness show,
And wild ambition well deserves its woe.
Here tears shall flow from a more generous cause,
Such tears as Patriots shed for dying laws :
He bids your breasts with ancient ardor rise,
And calls forth Roman drops from British eyes.
Virtue confess'd in human shape he draws,
What Plato thought, and God-like Cato was :
No common object to your sight displays,
But what with pleasure heav'n itself surveys ;
A brave man struggling in the storms of fate,
And greatly falling with a falling state !
While Cato gives his little senate laws,
What bosom beats not in his Country's cause ?
Who sees him act, but envies every deed ?
Who hears him groan, and does not wish to bleed ?
Even when proud Cæsar 'midst triumphal cars,
The spoils of Nations, and the pomp of Wars,
Ignobly vain, and impotently great,
Show'd Rome her Cato's figure drawn in state,
As her dead father's reverend image past,
The pomp was darken'd, and the day o'ercast,
The triumph ceas'd—tears gush'd from every eye,
The world's great victor pass'd unheeded by ;
Her last good man dejected Rome ador'd,
And honour'd Cæsar's less than Cato's sword.

Britons attend : be worth like this approv'd,
And shew you have the virtue to be mov'd.
With honest scorn the first-fam'd Cato view'd
Rome learning arts from Greece, whom she subdu'd.
Our scene precariously subsists too long
On French translation, and Italian song :
Dare to have sense yourselves ; assert the Stage,
Be justly warm'd with your own native rage.

Such Plays alone should please a British ear,
As Cato's self had not disdain'd to hear.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

Written by Dr. Garth.

WHAT odd fantastic things we women do !
 Who wou'd not listen when young lovers woo ? }
 But die a maid, yet have the choice of two !
 Ladies are often cruel to their cost ;
 To give you pain, themselves they punish most.
 Vows of virginity should well be weigh'd ;
 Too oft they're cancell'd, tho' in convents made.
 Would you revenge such rash resolves—you may :
 Be spiteful !—and believe the thing we say ;
 We hate you when you're easily said nay. }
 How needless, if you knew us, were your fears ?
 Let love have eyes, and beauty will have ears.
 Our hearts are form'd as you yourselves would chuse,
 Too proud to ask, too humble to refuse :
 We give to merit, and to wealth we sell ;
 He sighs with most success that settles well.
 The woes of wedlock with the joys we mix ;
 'Tis best repenting in a coach and six.

Blame not our conduct, since we but pursue
 Those lively lessons we have learn'd from you :
 Your breasts no more the fire of beauty warms,
 But wicked wealth usurps the power of charms ;
 What pains to get the gaudy thing you hate !
 To swell in show, and be a wretch in state !

At plays you ogle, at the ring you bow ;
 Even churches are no sanctuaries now ;
 There, golden idols all your vows receive,
 She is no goddess that has nought to give.
 Oh, may once more the happy age appear,
 When words were artless, and the thoughts sincere ;
 When gold and grandeur were unenvy'd things,
 And courts less coveted than groves and springs.
 Love then shall only mourn when truth complains,
 And constancy feel transport in its chains ;
 Sighs with success their own soft anguish tell,
 And eyes shall utter what the lips conceal :
 Virtue again to its bright station climb,
 And beauty fear no enemy but time ;
 The fair shall listen to desert alone,
 And every Lucia find a Cato's son.

P R O L O G U E

To Mr. *Addison's* DRUMMER, or the HAUNTED HOUSE.

IN this grave age, when Comedies are few,
 We crave your patronage for one that's New ;
 Tho' 'twere poor Stuff, yet bid the Author fair,
 And let the Scarceness recommend the Ware.
 Long have your ears been fill'd with tragic parts,
 Blood and Blank-verse have harden'd all your hearts ;
 If e'er you smile, 'tis at some party strokes,
 Round-heads and Wooden-shoes are standing jokes ;
 The same conceit gives claps and hisses birth.
 You're grown such politicians in your mirth !
 For once we try (tho' 'tis I own unsafe,)
 To please you all, and make both parties laugh.

Our author, anxious for his fame to-night,
 And bashful in his first attempt to write,
 Lies cautiously obscure and unreveal'd,
 Like ancient Actors in a mask conceal'd.
 Censure, when no man knows who writes the Play,
 Were much good malice merely thrown away.
 The mighty Critics will not blast, for shame,
 A raw young thing, who dares not tell his name :
 Good-natur'd judges will th' unknown defend,
 And fear to blame, lest they shou'd hurt a friend :
 Each Wit may praise it, for his own dear sake,
 And hint he writ it, if the Thing shou'd take.
 But if you're rough, and use him like a dog,
 Depend upon it——He'll remain *incog*.
 If you shou'd hiss, he swears he'll hiss as high,
 And, like a Culprit, join the hue-and-cry.

If cruel men are still averse to spare
 These scenes, they fly for refuge to the fair.
 Though with a Ghost our Comedy be heighten'd,
 Ladies, upon my word, you shan't be frighten'd ;
 O, 'tis a Ghost that scorns to be uncivil,
 A well-spread, lusty, jointure-hunting Devil ;
 An am'rous Ghost, that's faithful, fond and true,
 Made up of flesh and blood——as much as you.
 Then every evening come in flocks undaunted,
 We never think this House is too much Haunted.



EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by Mrs. *Oldfield*, in the Character of *Lady Trueman*.

TO-night the Poet's advocate I stand,
 And he deserves the favour at my hand,
 Who in my equipage their cause debating
 Has plac'd two lovers, and a third in waiting ;
 If both the first shou'd from their duty swerve,
 There's one behind the wainscot in reserve.
 In his next Play, if I would take this trouble,
 He promis'd me to make the number double :
 In troth 'twas spoke like an obliging creature,
 For tho' 'tis simple, yet it shews good-nature.

My help thus ask'd, I cou'd not choose but grant it,
 And really I thought the Play wou'd want it.
 Void as it is of all the usual arts
 To warm your fancies, and to steal your hearts :
 No Court-intrigue, no City-cuckoldom,
 No song, no dance, no music——but a Drum——
 No smutty thought in doubtful phrase express'd ;
 And, Gentlemen, if so, pray where's the jest ?
 When we wou'd raise your mirth, you hardly know
 Whether in strictness you shou'd laugh or no ;
 But turn upon the Ladies in the Pit,
 And if they redden, you are sure 'tis Wit.

Protect him then, ye Fair-ones ; for the Fair
 Of all conditions are his equal care.
 He draws a Widow, who, of blameless carriage,
 True to her jointure, hates a second marriage ;

And to improve a virtuous wife's delights,
 Out of one Man contrives two wedding-nights.
 Nay, to oblige the sex in every state,
 A nymph of five and forty finds her mate.

Too long has marriage, in this tasteless age,
 With ill-bred rallery supply'd the Stage;
 No little Scribbler is of Wit so bare,
 But has his fling at the poor wedded pair.
 Our Author deals not in conceits so stale :
 For shou'd th' examples of his Play prevail,
 No man need blush, tho' true to marriage vows,
 Nor be a jest tho' he shou'd love his spouse.
 Thus he has done you British consorts right,
 Whose husbands, shou'd they pry like mine to-night,
 Wou'd never find you in your conduct slipping,
 Tho' they turn'd conjurers to take you tripping.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *Richard Steele's* FUNERAL, or Grief A-la-mode.

NATURE deserted, and Dramatick art,
 To dazzle now the eye, has left the heart;
 Gay lights and dresses, long extended Scenes,
 Dæmons and Angels moving in Machines;
 All that can now, or please, or fright the fair,
 May be perform'd without a Writer's care,
 And is the skill of Carpenter, not Player.
 Old Shakespear's days could not thus far advance;
 But what's his Buskin to our Ladder Dance.
 In the mid region a silk youth to stand,
 With that unwieldy engine at command!
 Gorg'd with intemperate meals while here you sit,
 Well may you take activity for wit.

Fye, let confusion on such dulness seize ;
 Blush you're so pleas'd, as we that so we please.
 But we, still kind to your inverted sense,
 Do most unnatural things once more dispense.
 For since you're still prepos't'rous in delight,
 Our Author made, a full House to invite,
 A Funeral a Comedy to-night. }
 Nor does he fear that you will take the hint,
 And let the Funeral his own be meant ;
 No, in Old England nothing can be won
 Without a Faction, good or ill be done ;
 To own this our frank Author does not fear ;
 But hopes for a prevailing Party here :
 He knows h' has num'rous friends, nay, knows they'll
 shew it,
 And for the Fellow-Soldier save the Poet.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by Lord Hardy.

LOVE, Hope and Fear, Desire, Aversion, Rage, }
 All that can move the soul, or can assuage,
 Are drawn in miniature of life, the Stage. }
 Here you can view yourselves, and here is shown,
 To what you're borne in sufferings not your own,
 The stage to wisdom's no fantastick way,
 Athens herself learn'd virtue at a Play.
 Our Author me to night a Soldier drew,
 But faintly writ, what warmly you pursue :
 To his great purpose, had he equal fire,
 He'd not aim to please only, but inspire ;

He'd sing what hovering fate attends our isle,
 And from base pleasure rouse to glorious toil :
 Full time the earth t' a new decision brings,
 While William gives the Roman Eagle wings :
 With arts, and arms shall Britain tamely end,
 Which naked Picts so bravely could defend ?
 The painted heroes on th' invaders press,
 And think their wounds addition to their dress :
 In younger years we've been with conquest blest,
 And Paris has the British yoke confess'd ;
 Is't then in England, in blest England, known,
 Her Kings are nam'd from a revolted Throne ?
 But we offend——You no examples need,
 In imitation of yourselves proceed ;
 'Tis you your Country's honour must secure,
 Be all your actions worthy of Namure :
 With gentle fires your gallantry improve,
 Courage is brutal, if untouch'd with love :
 If soon our utmost bravery's not display'd,
 Think that bright circle must be captives made ;
 Let thoughts of saving them our toils beguile,
 And they reward our labours with a smile.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *Richard Steele's* TENDER HUSBAND.

Written by Mr. *Addison*.

IN the first rise and infancy of Farce,
 When Fools were many, and when Plays were scarce,
 The raw unpractis'd Authors could, with ease,
 A young and unexperienc'd Audience please :

No single character had e'er been shewn,
But the whole herd of fops was all their own ;
Rich in originals, they set to view,
In ev'ry piece, a coxcomb that was new.

But now our British Theatre can boast
Drolls of all kinds, a vast anthinking host !
Fruitful of Folly and of Vice it shows
Cuckolds, and Cits, and Bawds, and Pimps, and Beaux ;
Rough Country Knights are found of every Shire,
Of ev'ry fashion gentle Fops appear ;
And Punks of different characters we meet,
As frequent on the Stage as in the Pit :
Our Modern Wits are forc'd to pick and cull,
And here and there by chance glean up a fool :
Long e'er they find the necessary spark,
They search the Town and beat about the Park ;
To all his most frequented haunts resort,
Oft dog him to the Ring, and oft to Court,
As love of pleasure, or of place invites :
And sometimes catch him taking snuff at White's.

Howe'er ! to do you right, the present Age,
Breeds very hopeful Monsters for the Stage ;
That scorn the paths their dull forefathers trod,
And won't be blockheads in the common road.
Do but survey this crouded House to-night :

—————Here's still encouragement for those that write.

Our Author to divert his friends to-day,
Stocks with variety of Fools his Play ;
And that there may be something gay, and new,
Two Ladies-errant has expos'd to view :
The first a Damsel, travel'd in romance ;
The other more refin'd ; she comes from France.
Rescue, like courteous knights, the nymph from danger,
And kindly treat, like well-bred men, the Stranger.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

BRITONS, who constant war with factious rage,
 For liberty against each other wage,
 From Foreign insults save this English Stage.
 No more th' Italian squalling tribe admit,
 In tongues unknown; 'tis Popery in Wit.
 The Songs (themselves confess) from Rome they bring,
 And 'tis High-Mass, for ought you know, they sing.
 Husbands take care, the danger may come nigher,
 The women say their Eunuch is a Friar.

But is it not a serious ill to see
 Europe's great arbiters so mean can be;
 Passive, with an affected joy to sit,
 Suspend their native Taste of manly Wit;
 Neglect their Comic Humour, Tragic Rage,
 For known defects of Nature and of Age?
 Arise for shame, ye conqu'ring Britons rise;
 Such unadorn'd effeminacy despise;
 Admire (if you will dote on foreign Wit)
 Not what Italians sing, but Romans writ.
 So shall less works, such as to-night's slight Play,
 At your command with justice die away;
 'Till then forgive your Writers, that can't bear
 You shou'd such very Tramontanes appear,
 The nations, which condemn you, to revere.

Let Anna's soil be known for all its charms;
 As fam'd for lib'ral sciences as arms:
 Let those derision meet, who would advance
 Manners, or Speech, from Italy or France.
 Let them learn You, who wou'd your favour find,
And English be the Language of Mankind.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *Richard Steele's* LYING LOVER, or the LADIES
FRIENDSHIP.

ALL the commanding pow'rs that awe mankind
Are in a tremb'ling Poet's audience join'd,
Where such bright galaxies of beauty sit,
And at their feet assembled men of wit;
Our author therefore owns his deep despair,
To entertain the learned or the fair;
Yet hopes that both will so much be his friends,
To pardon what he does, for what h' intends;
He aims to make the coming Action move
On the dread laws of Friendship and of Love;
Sure then he'll find but very few severe,
Since there's of both so many objects here.
He offers no gross vices to your sight,
Those too much horror raise for just delight;
And to detain th' attentive knowing ear,
Pleasure must still have something that's severe.
If then you find our Author treads the Stage
With just regard to a reforming age;
He hopes, he humbly hopes, you'll think there's due
Mercy to him, for Justice done to you.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

OUR too advent'rous Author soar'd to-night
Above the little praise, mirth to excite,
And chose with pity to chastise delight.

For laughter's a distorted passion, born
 Of sudden self-esteem, and sudden scorn ;
 Which when 'tis o'er, the men in pleasure wise,
 Both him that mov'd it, and themselves, despise :
 While generous pity of a painted woe
 Make us ourselves both more approve and know.
 What is that touch within, which nature gave
 For man to man, e'er fortune made a slave ?
 Sure it descends from that dread power alone,
 Who levels thunder from his awful throne,
 And shakes both worlds, yet hears the wretched groan. }
 'Tis what the ancient sage could ne'er divine,
 Wonder'd—and call'd, part human, part divine :
 'Tis that pure joy, which guardian angels know,
 When timely they assist their cares below ;
 When they the good protect, the ill oppose ;
 'Tis what our Sovereign feels when she bestows,
 Which gives her glorious cause such high success,
 That only on the Stage you see distress.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *Richard Steele's* CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Written by Mr. *Welften*.

TO win your hearts, and to secure your praise,
 The Comic-writers strive by various ways :
 By subtle stratagems they act their game,
 And leave untry'd no avenue to fame.
 One writes the spouse a beating from his wife ;
 And says, each stroke was copy'd from the life.

Some fix all wit and humour in grimace,
 And make a livelihood of Pinkey's face :
 Here, one gay shew and costly habit tries,
 Confiding to the judgment of your eyes :
 Another smuts his scene (a cunning shaver)
 Sure of the rakes and of the wenches favour.
 Oft' have these arts prevail'd ; and one may guess,
 If practis'd o'er again, would find success.
 But the bold Sage the Poet of to-night,
 By new and desp'rate rules resolv'd to write ;
 Fain would he give more just applauses rise
 And please by Wit that scorns the aids of vice :
 The praise he seeks, from worthier motives springs,
 Such praise, as praise to those that give it brings.
 Your aid, most humbly sought, then Britons lend,
 And lib'ral mirth, like lib'ral men, defend :
 No more let ribaldry, with licence writ,
 Usurp the name of Eloquence, or Wit ;
 No more let lawless Farce uncensur'd go,
 The lewd dull gleanings of a Smithfield show.
 'Tis yours with breeding to refine the age,
 To chasten Wit, and moralize the Stage.
 Ye modest, wise, and good, ye fair, ye brave,
 To-night the champion of your virtues save,
 Redeem from long contempt the Comic name,
 And judge politely for your Country's fame.



EPILOGUE

To the same.

Intended to be spoken by *Indiana*.

Written by Mr. *Welfed*.

OUR Author, whom intreaties cannot move,
 Spite of the dear coquetry that you love,
 Swears he'll not frustrate (so he plainly means)
 By a loose Epilogue, his decent Scenes:
 Is it not, sirs, hard fate I meet to-day,
 To keep me rigid still, beyond the Play?
 And yet, I'm fav'd a world of pains that way:
 I now can look, I now can move at ease,
 Nor need I torture these poor limbs to please;
 Nor with the hand or foot attempt surprize,
 Nor wrest my features, nor fatigue my eyes:
 Bless me! what freakish gambols have I play'd!
 What motions try'd, and wanton looks betray'd!
 Out of pure kindness all! to over-rule
 The threaten'd hiss, and screen some scribbling fool.
 With more respect I'm entertain'd to-night:
 Our Author thinks, I can with ease delight.
 My artless looks while modest graces arm,
 He says, I need but to appear; and charm.
 A wife so form'd by these examples bred,
 Pours joy and gladness 'round the marriage bed;
 Soft source of comfort, kind relief from care,
 And 'tis her least perfection to be fair.
 The nymph with Indiana's worth who vies,
 A nation will behold with Bevil's eyes.



P R O L O G U E

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* RELAPSE, or Virtue in Danger.

LADIES, this Play in too much haste was writ,
 To be o'ercharg'd with either Plot or Wit;
 'Twas got, conceiv'd, and born in six weeks space,
 And wit, you know, 's as slow in growth — as grace.
 Sure it can ne'er be ripen'd to your taste;
 I doubt 'twill prove our author bred too fast:
 For mark 'em well, who with the Muses marry,
 They rarely do conceive, but they miscarry.
 'Tis the hard fate of those wh'are big with rhyme,
 Still to be brought to bed before their time.
 Of our late Poets, nature few has made;
 The greatest part — are only so by trade.
 Still want of something brings the scribbling fit;
 For want of Money some of 'em have writ,
 And others do't, you see — for want of Wit.
 Honour, they fancy, summons 'em to write,
 So out they lug in resty nature's spight;
 As some of you spruce Beaux do — when you fight.
 Yet let the ebb of Wit be ne'er so low,
 Some glimpse of it a man may hope to show,
 Upon a theme so ample — as a Beau.
 So, howsoe'er true courage may decay,
 Perhaps there's not one smock-face here to-day,
 But's bold as Cæsar, to attack a Play.
 Nay, what's yet more, with an undaunted face,
 To do the thing with more heroick grace,
 'Tis fix to four y' attack the strongest place,
 You are such hotspurs in this kind of venture,
 Where there's no breach, just there you needs must enter:

But be advis'd ———

E'en give the Hero and the Critic o'er,
For Nature sent you on another score ;
She form'd her Beau for nothing but her Whore. }

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Spoken by Lord *Foppington*.

GENTLEMEN and LADIES,

THESE people have regal'd you here to-day
(In my opinion) with a faucy Play ;
In which the Author does presume to shew,
That Coxcomb, *ab origine*,——was Beau.
Truly I think the thing of so much weight,
That if some sharp chastisement ben't his fate,
Gad's curse, it may in time destroy the state. }
I hold no one its friend, I must confess,
That wou'd discauntenance you men of dress.
Far, give me leave t'abserve, good clothes are things
Have ever been of great support to kings ;
All Treasons come from slovens, it is nat
Within the reach of gentle beaux to plat ;
They have no gall ; no spleen, no teeth, no stings,
Of all Gad's creatures, the most harmless things.
Thro' all recard, no prince was ever slain,
By one who had a feather in his brain.
They're men of too refin'd an education,
'To squabble with a court——for a vile dirty nation.
I'm very pafitive you never saw
A th'ro' republican a finish'd beau.

Nor truly shall you very often see
 A Jacobite much better dress'd than he :
 In shirt, thro' all the courts that I have been in,
 Your men of mischief—still are in foul linen.
 Did ever one yet dance the tyburn jig,
 With a free air, or a well powder'd wig ?
 Did ever highwayman yet bid you stand,
 With a sweet bawdy snuff-box in his hand ?
 And do you ever find they ask your purse
 As men of breeding do ? — Ladies, Gad's curse,
 This Author is a dog, and 'tis not fit
 You shou'd allow him even one grain of Wit :
 To which, that his pretence may ne'er be nam'd,
 My humble motion is—he may be damn'd.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* *Æsop*.

GALLANTS, we never yet produc'd a Play
 With greater fears than this we act to-day ;
 Barren of all the graces of the Stage,
 Barren of all that entertains this Age.
 No Hero, no Romance, no Plot, no Show,
 No Rape, no Bawdy, no Intrigue, no Beau :
 There's nothing in't with which we use to please ye ;
 With downright dull instruction w're to tease ye :
 The Stage turns Pulpit, and the world's so fickle,
 The Play-house in a whim turns Conventicle.
 But preaching here must prove a hungry trade,
 The patentees will find so, I'm afraid :
 For tho' with heavenly zeal you all abound,
 As by your lives and morals may be found ;

Tho' every female here o'erflows with grace,
 And chaste Diana's written in her face ;
 The maids renounce the sweets of fornication,
 And one lewd wife's not left in all the nation ;
 Tho' men grow true, and the foul fiend defy ;
 Tho' tradesmen cheat no more, nor lawyers lie ;
 Tho' not one spot be found on Levi's tribe,
 Nor one soft courtier that will touch a bribe ;
 Yet in the midst of such religious days,
 Sermons have never borne the price of Plays.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* PROVOK'D WIFE.

SINCE 'tis th' intent and business of the Stage,
 To copy out the follies of the age ;
 To hold to every man a faithful glass,
 And shew him of what species he's an ass :
 I hope the next that teaches in the school,
 Will shew our Author he's a scribbling fool.
 And that the satire may be sure to bite,
 Kind heav'n ! inspire some venom'd priest to write,
 And grant some ugly lady may indite. }
 For I wou'd have him lash'd, by heavens ! I wou'd,
 Till his presumption swim away in blood.
 Three Plays at once proclaim a face of brass,
 No matter what they are ; that's not the case, }
 To write three Plays, e'en that's to be an Ass.
 But what I least forgive, he knows it too,
 For to his cost he lately has known you.
 Experience shews, to many a writer's smart,
 You hold a court where mercy ne'er had part ;

So much of the old serpent's sting you have,
 You love to damn, as heav'n delights to save,
 In foreign parts, let a bold volunteer,
 For public good, upon the Stage appear,
 He meets ten thousand smiles, to dissipate his fear.
 All tickle on the adventuring young beginner,
 And only scourge th' incorrigible sinner;
 They touch indeed his faults, but with a hand
 So gentle, that his merit still may stand:
 Kindly they buoy the follies of his pen,
 That he may shun 'em when he writes again.
 But 'tis not so in this good-natur'd town,
 All's one, an Ox, a Poet, or a Crown;
 Old England's Play was always knocking down.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Written by another Hand.

Spoken by LADY BRUTE and BELINDA.

Lady Brute. NO Epilogue!

Belinda. I swear I know of none.

Lady Brute. Lord! How shall we excuse it to the town?

Belinda. Why, we must e'en say something of our own.

Lady Brute. Our own! ay, that must needs be precious stuff.

Belinda. I'll lay my life, they'll like it well enough.

Come, faith, begin——

Lady Brute. Excuse me,——after you.

Belinda. Nay, pardon me for that, I know my cue.

Lady Brute. O for the world, I would not have precedence.

Belinda. O lord !

Lady Brute. I swear ———

Belinda. O fye !

Lady Brute. I'm all obedience.

First then, know all, before our doom is fixt,
The third day is for us ———

Belinda. Nay and the sixth.

Lady Brute. We speak not from the poet now, nor is it
His cause——(I want a rhyme)

Belinda. That we solicit.

Lady Brute. Then sure you cannot have the hearts to
be severe,

And damn us ———

Belinda. Damn us ! let 'em if they dare.

Lady Brute. Why, if they should, what punishment remains?

Belinda. Eternal exile from behind our scenes.

Lady Brute. But if they're kind, that sentence we'll recall.
We can be grateful ——

Belinda. And have wherewithal.

Lady Brute. But at grand treaties hope not to be trusted,
Before preliminaries are adjusted.

Belinda. You know the time, and we appoint this place,
Where, if you please we'll meet and sign
the peace.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* FALSE FRIEND.

Spoken by Capt. Griffin.

YOU dread reformers of an impious age,
You awful cat-a-nine tails to the Stage,
This once be just, and in our cause engage.

}
}

To gain your favour, we your rules obey,
And treat you with a moral piece to-day ;
So moral, we're afraid 'twill damn the Play.

For tho' y'ave long been leagu'd (as people tell)
T' reduce the power exorbitant of hell ;
No troops you send, t'abate it in this field,
But leave us still expos'd, to starve or yield.
Your scouts indeed sometimes come stealing in,
T' observe this formidable camp of sin,
And whisper, if we'll piously declare,
What aids you then will send to help us thro' the war.

To this we answer, we're a feeble state,
And cannot well afford to love or hate,
So shou'd not meddle much in your debate.
But since your cause is good, thus far we'll go,
When Portugal declares, we'll do so too.
Our cases, as we think, are much alike,
And on the same conditions we should strike ;
Send to their aid a hundred men of war,
To ours a hundred squadrons of the fair ;
Rig out your wives and daughters all around,
(I mean wh' are fit for service, tight and sound)
And for a proof our meaning is sincere,
See but the ships are good, and if you fear
A want of equipage, we'll man them here.

These are the terms on which you may engage
The Poet's fire, to batter from the Stage,
Useful ally ! whose friendship lets you in
Upon the weak and naked side of sin ;
Against your old attack the foe's prepar'd,
Well fortify'd, and always on his guard ;
The sacred shot you send are flung in vain ;
By impious hands, with insolent disdain,
They're gather'd up, and fir'd at you again.

Thro' baffled toils, and unsuccessful cares,
 In slaughter, blood and wounds, and pious snares,
 Y've made a Flanders war these fifteen hundred years.
 Change then your scheme, if you'll your foe annoy,
 And the infernal Bajazet destroy :
 Our aid accept,
 W've gentler stratagems which may succeed ;
 We'll tickle 'em, where you would make 'em bleed :
 In sounds less harsh we'll teach 'em to obey ;
 In softer strains the evil spirit lay,
 And steal their immorality away.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

WHAT say you, Sirs, d'ye think my lady'll scape ?
 'Tis dev'lish hard to stand a fav'rite rape.
 Shou'd Guzman, like Don John break in upon her,
 For all her virtue, heaven ! have mercy on her :
 Her strength, I doubt, 's in his irresolution,
 There's wond'rous charms in vig'rous execution.
 Indeed you men are fools, you won't believe
 What dreadful things we women can forgive :
 I know but one we never do pass by,
 And that you plague us with eternally ;
 When in your courtly fears to disoblige,
 You won't attack the town which you besiege :
 Your guns are light, and planted out of reach :
 D'ye think with billet-doux to make a breach ?
 'Tis small-shot all, and not a stone will fly :
 Walls fall by cannon, and by firing nigh :
 In sluggish dull blockades you keep the field,
 And starve us ere we can with honour yield.

In short——

We can't receive those terms you gently tender,
But storm, and we can answer our surrender.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* CONFEDERACY.

Spoken by a shabby Poet.

YE gods! what crime had my poor father done,
That you should make a Poet of his son?

Or is't for some great services of his,

Y'are pleas'd to compliment his boy——with this?

[Shewing his crown of laurel.]

The honour, I must needs confess, is great,

If, with his crown, you'd tell him where to eat.

'Tis well——But I have more complaints——look here!

[Shewing his ragged coat.]

Hark ye;—d'ye think this suit good winter wear?

In a cold morning; whu——at a lord's gate,

How you have let the porter let me wait!

You'll say, perhaps, you knew I'd get no harm,

You'd given me fire enough to keep me warm.

Ah——

A world of blessings to that fire we owe;

Without it I'd ne'er made this princely show.

I have a brother too, now in my sight,

[Looking behind the scenes.]

A busy man amongst us here to-night:

Your fire has made him play a thousand pranks,

For which, no doubt, you've had his daily thanks;

He as thank'd you, first, for all his decent Plays,

Where he so nick'd it, when he writ for praise.

Next for his meddling with some folks in black,
 And bringing—Soufe—a priest upon his back ;
 For building houses here t'oblige the peers,
 And fetch'ing all their house about his ears ;
 For a new Play, he'as now thought fit to write,
 To sooth the town—which they—will damn to-night.

These benefits are such, no man can doubt
 But he'll go on, and set your fancy out,
 Till for reward of all his noble deeds,
 At last, like other sprightly folks, he speeds :
 Has this great recompence fix'd on his brow
 As fam'd Parnassus ; has your leave to bow
 And walk about the streets—equipp'd—as I am now.

E P I L O G U E

To the same.

I'VE heard wise men in politicks lay down
 What feats by little England might be done,
 Were all agreed, and all would act as one.
 Ye wives an useful hint from this might take,
 The heavy, old, despotick kingdom shake,
 And make your matrimonial Monsieurs quake.
 Our heads are feeble, and we're cramp'd by laws ;
 Our hands are weak, and not too strong our cause :
 Yet would those heads and hands, such as they are,
 In firm confed'racy resolve on war,
 You'd find your tyrants——what I've found my dear.
 What only two united can produce
 You've seen to-night, a sample for your use :
 Single, we found we nothing could obtain ;
 We join'd our force——and we subdu'd our men.

Believe me (my dear sex)-they are not brave ;
 Try each your man, you'll quickly find your slave.
 I know they'll make campaigns, risk blood and life ;
 But this is a more terrifying strife ;
 They'll stand a shot, who'll tremble at a wife.
 Beat then your drums, and your shrill trumpets sound,
 Let all your visits of your feats resound,
 And deeds of war in cups of tea go round :
 The stars are with you, fate is in your hand,
 In twelve months time you've vanquish'd half the land ;
 Be wise, and keep 'em under good command.
 This year will to your glory long be known,
 And deathless ballads hand your triumphs down ;
 Your late achievements ever will remain,
 For tho' you cannot boast of many slain,
 Your pris'ners shew, you've made a brave campaign.

P R O L O G U E

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* MISTAKE.

Written by Mr. *Steele*.

OUR Author's Wit and Raillery to-night
 Perhaps might please, but that your Stage delight
 No more is in your Minds, but Ears and Sight.
 With audiences compos'd of belles and beaux,
 The first dramatick rule is, have good clothes.
 To charm the gay spectator's gentle breast,
 In lace and feather tragedy's express'd,
 And heroes dye unpity'd, if ill-dress'd.

The other stile you full as well advance ;
 If 'tis a Comedy, you ask—who dance ?
 For oh ! what dire convulsions have of late
 Torn and distracted each dramatic state,

On this great question, which house first should sell
 The new French steps, imported by Ruel !
 Desbarques can't rise so high, we must agree,
 They've half a foot in height more wit than we.
 But tho' the genius of our learned age
 Thinks fit to dance and sing, quite off the Stage,
 True Action, Comic Mirth, and Tragic Rage ;
 Yet as your taste now stands, our Author draws
 Some hopes of your indulgence and applause.
 For that great end this edifice he made,
 Where humble swain at lady's feet is laid ;
 Where the pleas'd nymph her conquer'd lover spies,
 Then to glass pillars turns her conscious eyes,
 And points anew each charm, for which he dies.

The muse, before nor terrible nor great,
 Enjoys by him this awful gilded seat :
 By him theatric angels mount more high,
 And mimic thunders shake a broader sky.

Then all must own, our Author has done more
 For your delight, than ever bard before.
 His thoughts are still to raise your pleasures fill'd ;
 To write, translate, to blazon, or to build.
 Then take him in the lump, nor nicely pry
 Into small faults, that 'scape a busy eye ;
 But kindly, sirs, consider, he to-day
 Finds you the House, the Actors, and the Play :
 So, tho' we Stage-mechanic rules omit,
 You must allow it in a Whole-sale Wit.



EPILOGUE

To the same.

Written by Mr. Motteux.

IM thinking, now good husbands are so few,
 To get one for my friend what I must do.
 Camillo ventur'd hard; yet at the worst,
 She stole love's honey-moon, and try'd her lover first.
 Many poor damsels, if they dar'd to tell,
 Have done as much, but have not scap'd so well.
 'Tis well the scene's in Spain; thus, in the dark,
 I should be loath to trust a London spark.
 Some accident might for a private reason,
 Silence a female, all this acting-season.
 Hard fate of woman: any one wou'd vex,
 To think what odds, you men have, of our sex.
 Restraint and custom share our inclination,
 You men can try, and run o'er half the nation.
 We dare not, even to avoid reproach,
 When you're at White's, peep out of hackney-coach;
 Nor with a friend at night, our fame regarding,
 With glass drawn up, drive 'bout Covent-Garden.
 If poor town-ladies steal in here, you rail,
 Tho' like chaste nuns their modest looks they veil;
 With this decorum, they can hardly gain
 To be thought virtuous, e'en in Drury-Lane.
 Tho' this you'll not allow, yet sure you may
 A plot to snap you, in an honest way.
 In love affairs, one scarce would spare a brother:
 All cheat; and married folks may keep a pother,
 But look as if they cheated one another.

You may pretend, our sex dissembles most ;
 But of your truth none have much cause to boast :
 You promise bravely ; but for all your storming,
 We find you're not so valiant at performing.

Then sure Camillo's conduct you'll approve :
 Wou'd you not do as much for one you love.
 Wedlock's but a blind bargain at the best,
 You venture more sometimes, to be not half so blest.
 All, soon or late, that dangerous venture make,
 And some of you may make a worse Mistake.

P R O L O G U E

To *George Granville Lord Lansdowne's* HEROIC LOVE.

Written by the Right Hon. *Henry St. John*, Esq;

HOW hard's the Poet's task, in these our days,
 Who such dull palates is condemn'd to please,
 As damn all sense, and only fustian praise ?
 Charm'd with heroic nonsense, lofty strains,
 Not with the writer's, but the player's pains,
 And by the Actors lungs, judge of the Poet's brains.

Let scribbling judges, who your pleasures serve,
 Live by your smiles, or by your anger starve ;
 To please you in your vain fantastic war,
 Renounce their judgment, to secure their pay :
 By written laws, our Author would be try'd,
 And write as if Athenians should decide,
 With Horace and the Stagyrte for guide.
 Applause is welcome, but too dearly bought,
 Should we give up one rule, those mighty masters taught.
 Yet some, methinks, I here and there descry,
 Who may with ancient Rome and Athens vie :
 To whose tribunal we submit with joy :

To them, and only them ; for not to wrong ye
'Twould be a shame to please the most among ye.

Chiefly the softer sex he hopes to move,
Those tender judges of Heroic Love :
To that bright circle he resigns his cause,
And if they smile he asks no more applause.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

Written by *Bevill Higgons*, Esq;

WHAT will the Galleries, nay Boxes say ?
There's not one man destroy'd in all our Play.
Murder and blood have long possess'd the Stage,
And pleas'd the genius of a barbarous age :
But since the Poet's task's the soul to move,
And with his objects, make you grieve or love, }
Surviving wretches should more pity find
Than they who die, and leave their woes behind.

On Athens' Stage, when Greece the world gave law,
Her sprightly dames our Agamemnon saw ;
They shar'd his sorrows, did his fate bemoan,
And always made the hero's wrongs their own.
But then the world was gay, and nature young,
Mens passions were more high, and fancy strong ;
Poets could either raise, or make so sad,
That going home, whole audiences ran mad.
In vain we would your colder hearts inspire,
And blow up flames, without the seeds of fire.

Three thousand years ago, illustrious dames
Attended camps, and gave the heroes flames ;

Now every wench, when batter'd and decay'd,
To Flanders fled, where straight the rampant jade
At once the colonel serv'd, and the brigade. }

If Poets have the privilege of laws
To challenge juries, who must try their cause ?
To judge of Wit, the Critic be debarr'd,
Who often damns what he ne'er saw nor heard ;
Besides, he still to Poets bears a spite,
For never yet was Critic who could write.

For you, the viler rabble of the Pit,
Who want good-nature tho' you have no wit,
Maliciously you imitate the times,
Like judges, try the Men, and not their Crimes ;
With noise and nonsense whom you hate decry,
And if demanded, give no reason why ;
But when no pity can the torrent stem,
Attaint the Poet whom you can't condemn.
'Tis on that shining circle we depend, [To the ladies.
For you ——
Our Poet writes,—in gratitude defend :
Of love and honour he a pattern meant,
And took the bright ideas that you lent :
Your picture drawn, show then the painter grace,
Who fails in an inimitable face.



EPILOGUE

To *George Granville Lord Lansdowne's* ONCE a LOVER ;
AND ALWAYS A LOVER.

Spoken by ANGELICA.

I Who have been the Poet's spark to day,
Behold me now the champion of his Play.
Know all, who would pretend to my good grace,
I mortally dislike a damning face.
I say—odzooks! 'tis good—and I'll stand by it :
Now let me see the man who dares deny it.
Who shall pretend to doubt my will, and pleasure,
Him I defy to send his weapon's measure :
I'll give him satisfaction——that I can——
'Sdeath, 'tis not the first time, I've kill'd my man.
On pain of being posted to your sorrow,
Fail not at four to meet me here to-morrow.

P R O L O G U E

To *George Granville Lord Lansdowne's* JEW OF VENICE.

Written by *Bevill Higgons, Esq;*

The Ghosts of *Shakespear* and *Dryden* arise, crowned
with Laurel.

Dryd. THIS radiant circle, reverend *Shakespear*, view,
An audience only to the bustin due.

Shakesp. A scene so noble ancient Greece ne'er saw,
Nor Pompey's dome, when Rome the world gave law.

I feel at once both wonder and delight,
 By beauty warm'd transcendently so bright,
 Well, Dryden, might'st thou sing ; well may these }
 heroes fight.

Dryd. With all the outward lustre which you find,
 They want the nobler beauties of the mind,
 Their sickly judgments, what is just, refuse,
 And French grimace, buffoons, and mimicks choose ;
 Our scenes desert, some wretched farce to see :
 They know not nature, for they taste not thee.

Shakesp. Whose stupid souls thy passion cannot move,
 Are deaf indeed to nature and to love.
 When thy Ægyptian weeps, what eyes are dry !
 Or who can live to see thy Roman die ?

Dryd. Thro' perspectives revers'd, they nature view,
 Which give the passions images, not true.
 Strephon for Strephon sighs ; and Sappho dies,
 Shot to the soul by brighter Sappho's eyes :
 No wonder then their wand'ring passions roam,
 And feel not nature, whom th'ave overcome.
 For shame, let genial love prevail agen,
 You beaux, love ladies ; and you ladies, men.

Shakesp. These crimes unknown, in our less polish'd age,
 Now seem above correction of the Stage ;
 Less heinous faults, our justice does pursue ;
 To day we punish a stock-jobbing Jew.
 A piece of justice, terrible and strange ;
 Which, if pursu'd, would make a thin Exchange.
 The law's defect, the juster muse supplies,
 'Tis only we can make you good, or wise, }
 Whom heaven spares, the poet will chastise.
 These scenes in their rough native dress were mine ;
 But now, improv'd, with nobler lustre shine ;
 The first rude sketches Shakespear's pencil drew,
 But all the shining master-strokes are new.

This Play, ye critics, shall your fury stand,
Adorn'd and rescu'd by a faultless hand.

Dryd. I long endeavour'd to support thy stage,
With the faint copies of thy nobler rage,
But toil'd in vain for an ungenerous age.
They starv'd me living; nay, deny'd me fame,
And scarce, now dead, do justice to my name.
Wou'd you repent? Be to my ashes kind,*
Indulge the pledges I have left behind.

EPILOGUE

To the same.

EACH in his turn, the † Poet and the † Priest,
Have view'd the Stage, but like false prophets guess'd:
The man of zeal, in his religious rage,
Would silence Poets, and reduce the Stage.
The Poet rashly, to get clear, retorts
On kings the scandal, and bespatters courts:
Both err; for without mincing, to be plain,
The guilt is yours of every odious scene.
The present time still gives the Stage its mode,
The vices which you practise, we explode:
We hold the glass, and but reflect your shame,
Like Spartans, by exposing, to reclaim.
The scribbler, pinch'd with hunger, writes to dine,
And to your genius must conform his line;
Not lewd by choice, but merely to submit;
Would you encourage sense, sense would be writ.

* The profits of this Play were designed for Mr. Dryden, but upon his death were given to his son.

† Mr. Dryden, in his Prologue to the Pilgrim.

‡ Mr. Collier, in his View of the Stage.

Plain beauties pleas'd your fires an age ago,
 Without the varnish, and the dawb of show.
 At vast expence we labour to our ruin,
 And court your favour by our own undoing.
 A war of profit mitigates the evil,
 But to be tax'd and beaten, is the devil.
 How was the scene forlorn, and how despis'd,
 When Timon, without music, moraliz'd!
 Shakespear's sublime in vain entic'd the throng,
 Without the charm of Purcell's syren song.

In the same antique loom these scenes were wrought,
 Embellish'd with good morals, and just thought:
 True nature in her noblest light you see,
 Ere yet debauch'd by modern gallantry,
 To trifling jest, and fulsome ribaldry. }
 What rust remains upon the shining mass
 Antiquity may privilege to pass.
 'Tis Shakespear's play, and if these scenes miscarry,
 Let * Gorman take the Stage—or † Lady Mary.

E P I L O G U E

To Lord *Lansdowne's* BRITISH ENCHANTERS.

Written by the Right Hon. *Joseph Addison*, Esq;

WHEN Orpheus tun'd his pipe with pleasing woe,
 Rivers forgot to run, and winds to blow;
 While list'ning forests cover'd, as he play'd,
 The soft musician in a moving shade.
 That this night's strains the same success may find,
 The force of magic is to beauty join'd:
 Where sounding strings, and artful voices fail,
 The charming rod, and mutter'd spells prevail.

* A famous prize-fighter. † A famous rope-dancer.

Let sage Urganda wave the circling wand
On barren mountains, or a waste of sand,
The desert smiles, the woods begin to grow,
The birds to warble, and the springs to flow.

The same dull fights in the same landskip mixt,
Scenes of still life, and points for ever fixt,
A tedious pleasure on the mind bestow,
And pall the sense with one continued show:
But as our true magicians try their skill,
The vision varies, tho' the place stands still;
While the same spot its gaudy form renews,
Shifting the prospect to a thousand views.
Thus (without unity of place transgress'd)
Th' enchanter turns the critic to a jest.

But howsoe'er to please your wand'ring eyes,
Bright objects disappear, and brighter rise:
There's none can make amends for lost delight,
While from that circle * we divert your fight.

* The ladies.

FINIS.